



THE NEW EVANGELISATION: PRIESTS AND LAITY

The Great Challenge of the New Millennium



22-24 May 2007 • Emmaus • Swords • Co. Dublin • Ireland



Talks from the Conference on

**The New Evangelisation:
Priests and Laity**

The Great Challenge of the New Millennium

held on

22-24 May 2007

and

organised by the Legion of Mary

in

Emmaus,

Swords, Co. Dublin, Ireland

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PREFACE

*Tommy McCabe, President,
Concilium Legionis Mariae*



*Fr. Bede McGregor O.P.,
Concilium Spiritual Director and
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Servant of God Frank Duff*

The talks collected in these pages are a real treasure, which merit close study by priests and laity and should, if reflected upon and acted upon, prove to be a very valuable instrument in the New Evangelisation, which is so important in the mission of the Church today. The talks, which were presented at a Conference for Priests: *The New Evangelisation: Priests and Laity - The Great Challenge of the New Millennium*, organised by the Legion of Mary, include those by the Archbishop of Dublin and two Cardinals, one in charge of the Congregation for Divine Worship, and the other the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, in the Vatican. They show us in a profound way, the mind of the Church in regard to Evangelisation at this time. There are talks, too, by priests distinguished in different fields, who give of their knowledge and experience. The voice of lay people is also heard in these pages.

In the opening talk, Archbishop Martin thanks the Legion of Mary for this affirmation of priests and speaks of his contact with the Servant of God, Frank Duff. He says that there is no Church without the Eucharist and speaks of Mary as the Mother of priests. Cardinal Arinze says "Evangelisation is the mandate given by our beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to his whole Church. In this Church there are different but complementary roles assigned to priests and to the lay faithful. It matters very much for the success of the mission of the Church that these roles be properly understood, lovingly accepted and dynamically carried out." He says that the new Evangelisation is not new in its content but in its fervour. He notes that about 17½% of the world's population is Catholic. He goes on to define who are the Lay Faithful and says that their proper area of apostolate is to give witness in worldly activities. He cites the Legion of Mary as a good example of collaboration between priests and lay faithful. Cardinal Dias speaks out of his own experience on *True Devotion to Mary in the life of a Priest* and says that Mary can make happy and holy priests. He speaks of the many Marian Shrines in the world, and of the manifestation of the Miraculous Medal by Our Lady to St. Catherine Labouré and refers to the use of the medal by the Legion. He says: "Be convinced of the victory of Christ through Mary."

Fr. Brendan Leahy, Professor of Dogmatic Theology, says: "it seems the Holy Spirit wants us to rediscover the Church's Marian profile as the basis for our re-launching out into the deep." Fr. Paul Churchill, Marriage Tribunal, Archdiocese of Dublin, mentions the personal support for the priest, which the Legion gives. Fr. Gerard Deighan, Lecturer in Scripture, says that Mary mediates every grace and brings us joy; Mary's outstretched arms are an invitation to gather round her.

Fr. Pádraig Ó Cochláin, Chaplain, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin, in introducing one of the sessions makes the call: "Let us start the new evangelization of Ireland." Fr. Bede McGregor, O.P. Concilium Spiritual Director and Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God Frank Duff, says: "Above all the vision of Frank Duff concerning the priest and laity can only be understood in the context of evangelisation and the salvation of souls. Both priest and laity must be totally christocentric and the central focus of Christ is the salvation of souls. Our Lord put it categorically more than once: 'I came to save sinners.' Evangelization is simply cooperating in the work of redemption." He speaks of Frank Duff's profound reverence for the Priesthood and how he had spent his life trying to get people into Heaven. Monsignor Joseph Murphy from the Secretariat of State, Vatican, declares that only in Christ do we find true joy and that Christianity must present itself as the Religion of Truth and Love. He also speaks of Mary as the image of the Church.

Dr. Finola Kennedy, a legionary and an economist, declares: "I think the Church is fully alive only when the priest and laity work together. To encourage the laity, to help them to gain knowledge of their religion, to mobilise and to lead them in the apostolic work of the Church, that is what the priest means to the lay apostolate." She speaks of how bishops and priests, some of whom she mentions, had known how to use lay people in the Legion.

The lives of Venerable Edel Quinn and the Servants of God, Frank Duff and Alfie Lambe, are put before us as wonderful examples of the spiritual and apostolic life by Fr. John Hogan of the Meath Diocese and by legionaries, Síle Ní Chochláin and Noel Lynch.

For completeness sake, it should be noted that other speakers gave inspiring testimonies, which are not included in these pages. These included:

Declan Lawlor who gave witness to the importance of the Legion in his life and in his profession as a solicitor. Fr. Owen Gorman, a priest from the Clogher Diocese, and three legionaries, Mary Mulpeter, Liam Hayden and Bernardo de Nardo, who addressed *Challenges facing the Irish Church today* such as Mass attendance, Vocations, Family Life, and preaching on moral matters.

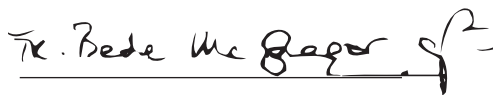
In addition, it was not possible to include the many substantial contributions made by the priests and laypeople present at the Conference.

May these pages lead us to a greater love of God our Father, of Jesus and Mary and the Church and make us more receptive to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the conversion of the world to the glory of the Blessed Trinity.



Tommy McCabe
President
Concilium Legionis Mariae

Pentecost Sunday, 11 May 2008



Fr. Bede McGregor O.P.
Spiritual Director and Postulator for the Cause of
the Servant of God Frank Duff, Concilium Legionis Mariae

FOREWARD



His Eminence Seán Cardinal Brady, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland

The lectures on New Evangelisation organised by the Legion of Mary and delivered at a Conference at the Emmaus Conference Centre, from 22 -24 May, 2007, brought together a very high level of expertise on the topic of the New Evangelisation which, as a world programme, aims at the restoration of Christianity in the developed world and the completion of the Church's missionary task in the third world.

The Conference focused on the crucial key to success in this programme, the co-operation of priests and laity in mission. In the days of Pius XI 'Catholic Action' was born and the mobilisation of the laity was promoted. Now, seventy years later, the priest in the western hemisphere, can often feel isolated and intimidated, ill-prepared to respond to the call to mission. Yet Europe is being called to think in its heart once more and to set out to regain its Christian identity.

The Conference was also organised with a view to giving support and encouragement at a difficult and stressful time for many priests. The support of the laity is very important for priests to sustain, encourage and assist them in their joint mission.

It was the Lord himself who set the pattern of seeking co-workers, first with the twelve and then with the seventy-two. He trained them by bringing them on his missionary rounds. The Legion of Mary, among other movements, gives the priest the possibility of having co-workers in mission, of reaching out to the lapsed, to the alienated, to separated brothers and sisters, to the young, and all of this in a global dimension.

Priests representing every diocese of Ireland attended the Conference, and they, along with overseas participants, found the it a rewarding and invigorating occasion. Could it be otherwise, held as it was under the auspices of Mary, Star of Evangelisation and Spouse of the Holy Spirit? May the reader of these pages likewise find inspiration and renewed courage in the conviction of the distinguished speakers who contributed to the Conference - and may the voice of the Servant of God, Frank Duff, whose trenchant cry "The Priest must have Members" and his other call "Church or chaplaincy?" be heard afresh in our own day.

Seán Cardinal Brady



Seán Cardinal Brady,
Archbishop of Armagh,
Primate of All Ireland



Tuesday 22 May 2007

1. OPENING ADDRESS:

THE NEW EVANGELISATION: PRIESTS AND LAITY: THE GREAT CHALLENGE OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM



Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland

I am very pleased to open this Conference sponsored by the Legion of Mary on the theme of New Evangelisation: Priests and Laity facing the great challenge of the new millennium.

It is interesting that this is a Conference for Priests which has been organised and inspired by a movement constituted primarily of lay persons. I see in this, first of all, a great sign of confidence on the part of lay people in their priests, a sense of respect and admiration for the ministry of priests. This sense of affirmation is most welcome at a time in which many priests have been unsettled by the changes and challenges in Irish society and sadly also by the effects of failure and infidelity of priests. On behalf of the priests present here, and on my own behalf, I would like to express our thanks and our appreciation to the Legion of Mary for this gesture of affirmation and encouragement.

The title of the Conference however reminds us very clearly that we have not come here just to encourage and to support one another, no matter how important and timely that may be. The thrust of the Conference is to help us to look forward to the future. Our task is to see what New Evangelisation means for us and for our ministry. We want to reflect on how the New Evangelisation can be shaped in the years to come, in a century and a Millennium which will be very different to the past and even the recent past. We look at a future where the challenges will be new, but also where the opportunities will be new.

We are called to be priests and laity in this particular world in which we live, not at any other moment in history. The Lord will judge us not on our knowledge of the history of evangelisation and mission but on our effective commitment to evangelisation in the specific and concrete world in which he has called us to be his witnesses.

I know that tomorrow Father Bede McGregor will speak to you about Frank Duff's vision of priests and laity. Without trying to usurp his theme - about which he is certainly much more knowledgeable than I am - allow me to say some short words on my experience of Frank Duff. I speak as the successor to at least two Archbishops of Dublin who, as is

well known, did not fully share Frank's vision or at least had some anxieties about a lay organisation which became involved in direct evangelisation.

I only met with Frank Duff on a few occasions when I was a student in Clonliffe College. I remember in particular when he came to speak to us as Deacons in the final months prior to ordination.

When you met Frank Duff the first thing that struck you was his simplicity. His simplicity and his kind smile were disarming. On that day in Clonliffe, Frank came on his bicycle. There were no designer clothes, no smooth language, and no attempt to cultivate an image. The farthest thing from his mind would have been to try to be impressive in the terms of our consumerist, media, sound-byte culture.

Frank Duff rejected any form of sham or affectation. His greatness was in the depth of his bond with the Lord, and that needed no external supports. This spilled over into the works that he established where authenticity and genuine direct Christian charity and caring were the hallmarks. Frank Duff was too busy witnessing to Jesus' caring love to be concerned about his own image.

It was my good fortune to be able to know at first hand over many years the life of the Church in many countries in every continent. Talk to a Bishop in Africa or in Asia who tells you he was in Dublin and you do not have to ask much more: he had come to visit Frank Duff or the Headquarters of the Legion of Mary.

Talk to African bishops about the apostolic activities in their dioceses and you would find that the Legion of Mary was one of the most extraordinary instruments that they had for Christian formation and service. Here once again, Bishops will tell you that the Legion of Mary was Church in action, without any pretence or sham. The Legion was dependable, it was zealous, it was prayerful, and it was caring, just as its founder would have wished it to be. Out of this apostolic fervour the Legion of Mary produced many priests.

And the Legion had a special charism where there were no priests. Many bishops from communist countries will tell you how the lay apostolic activity of the Legion of Mary was so decisive for the life of the Church during the long years of persecution. Its lay character was for them providential. It was a special gift of God in the particular situation of persecution, where the Legion of Mary kept alive the life of prayer and of Christian charity within families and communities even in the darkest days of repression.

Frank Duff had then an intuitive, yet revolutionary, understanding of the role of the laity. He was himself very much a lay man. He understood that his specific vocation was that of being a lay person. It was for this reason that Frank Duff was called as one of the few lay *auditores* at the Second Vatican Council, a remarkable honour indeed.

Priests and lay persons are co-workers in the Lord's vineyard. Each of us was first of all baptised as a lay Christian. As priests we should never forget that our roots are in an ecclesial community. Our vocation is the fruit of the nourishment of many lay persons: our parents and family members, our teachers, those who we encountered in our search for deeper faith. Our priesthood was generated, in that sense, from within the community of the faith of lay persons. As priests we are called to minister to lay persons but we should never forget that we still learn much of the

essence of the Christian message from the Christian lives of those to whom we minister.

Ordination to the ministerial priesthood brings with it a sacramental character which changes the priest. But priesthood is not just a personal honour or possession to be used as I wish and just for myself. Priesthood is always a ministry of service, a ministry in which we share the gifts we have received and of which we are ministers with the people that are entrusted to our care. Priesthood is a ministry of service.

It is always good to remember that on the Holy Thursday evening, the evening in which the Church recalls the institution of the Eucharist, the Church takes as the Gospel reading the only one of the four Gospels which does not have narrative of the institution of the Eucharist, as the others have, but the story of the washing of the feet. The story of the washing of the feet explains for us something of the essence of the Eucharist and thus of the essence of the ministry of priests. Eucharist and priestly service are both rooted in experiencing, in witnessing to and in sharing with others the self-giving, redeeming love of Jesus.

Priestly mission is a mission of service. In his recent Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist Pope Benedict recalls however that it is a particular form of service. "The priest", the Pope says, "is above all a servant of others, and he must continually work at being a sign pointing to Christ, a docile instrument in the Lord's hands". Ministry is never about self-enhancement, it is about living a life that points to Jesus Christ.

Speaking about the role of the priest in the liturgical assembly, the Pope on more than one occasion stresses that the priest should avoid "anything that might give the impression of an inordinate emphasis on his own personality", noting that "any attempt to make ourselves the centre of liturgical action contradicts our very identity as priests".

This is not simply an appeal to observe the rubrics of the Mass and to avoid a type of "liturgical protagonism" centred on ourselves and our talents. There is a clear sense in which this same principle can be applied to priestly ministry across the board. Our ministry is one of service and self-giving love, being a sign pointing not to ourselves, but pointing to Christ, through being a docile instrument in the Lord's hands. The evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience to which we are called find their meaning when they become a conscious reflection in our lives of the self-giving love of Jesus.

The New Evangelisation must witness to that love and to the fundamental values that spring from it, values to be lived in a world which may not understand them or may be hostile to them. Throughout history, Jesus' message and the graciousness of his words have constantly been received with rejection and lack of graciousness. We should not be surprised today in our ministry to encounter rejection and misunderstanding. The way to react is however not to close in on ourselves but to make our lives more available for the message of Jesus. The worst thing that we could do is to lose that spark of generosity which inspired us in the first place to answer the call of the Lord. When we close in on ourselves we curtail our freedom; we become less ourselves. When we open ourselves to the challenge, then we find ourselves again. In this way our encounter with Jesus who came to serve will engender a life of joy because we realise that in his mercy Jesus frees us from sin and weakness and restores us to be fully ourselves in freedom.

Where do we find true freedom? The Gospel of Saint John tells us quite clearly. It is the truth that will make us free. The Church is where the truth is proclaimed about God and about humankind and indeed about the integrity of the entire creation in which we live. The priest is one who is called to witness to and proclaim the truth about Jesus Christ.

If we look at the teachings of Jesus we can see that he saw his own witness to the truth as central to his mission. He came "to bear witness to the truth". His personal claims to truth, especially to the truth about his own divine identity, were considered scandalous. His moral teachings especially in the Sermon on the Mount were prefixed by an extraordinarily strong statement of the authority with which Jesus taught his truth "You have heard what was said... but I tell you".

Jesus indeed identifies himself with the truth in an absolute sense: "I am the way, the truth and the life". As priests we are called to teach, to teach the word of God, to preach the truth of Jesus and to witness to that truth in our lives.

Priesthood means witnessing to the truth. But we must witness to the truth as Jesus did. The Jesus who presented his claim to truth in an absolute sense was also the one who wished to be among his disciples as a servant. We can recall that beautiful scriptural hymn from the Letter to the Philippians. "Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, humbling himself, even unto death on a cross". The Jesus who knew the authority on which his truth was based chose to reveal that truth through a life of service. He attains Lordship not through clinging to the outward trappings of sovereignty, authority or power, but through total self giving. He attains "the name that is above every other name, so that every tongue can confess him as Lord" through self-giving love unto the end. By giving himself for our sake, Jesus revealed the depth of God's love for us.

With his remarkable teaching, especially in his Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI has challenged us all to reflect in our ministry what it means to be witnesses to a God who is love.

Our priestly ministry must work to ensure that the universal law of love is encountered by all we meet on our path and all whose journey we are called to share. We have to bring that love to those who have never encountered it. We have to bring that love to those who have rejected Christ's message because they never encountered it as a message of love. We have to bring that love to those who are lost in the entrapment of sin.

The Christian life is not a collection of rules and formulas which are imposed on the individual, but the message about a person – Jesus Christ – who comes out to meet us in our sinfulness – as did the Father of the prodigal son – filled with love, compassion and forgiveness.

Our young people in the senior years at school and in the years of their early professional and married life are constantly being challenged by questions about the meaning of life and of success. They experience the emptiness of a having which is not accompanied by giving and loving. New Evangelisation means helping our young people to realise that the answer to that emptiness is to be found in Jesus Christ. The ability to interpret that word of God as a source of meaning must be a principal quality of the priest of tomorrow. We must bring this message to young and old, to those who are suffering and anxious, to those who are lost along the way as well as to those who are indifferent or have lost

any sensitivity to the Christian message.

But our breaking of the word will only be credible if our life style reflects that self-giving love of Jesus. We have ourselves to reject false securities of consumerism and throw ourselves into the risk of what is inherent of being the fragile instruments which God chooses to work through. We have to overcome our anxieties and fears and insecurities and serve the Lord with gladness, with joy and dedication.

Priestly ministry is a ministry of service, but not like that of a social worker or a counsellor. How are we to define what is specific to priestly ministry? It would be foolish not to admit that there are many priests who are tempted to seek satisfaction and recognition in areas which, however good and vital they are, are perhaps at the borders of what is specifically priestly. They find that they receive recognition today above all for their commitment to the transformation of society.

Transformation of the world is certainly part of the ministry of the priest. But the specific mission of the priest in transforming the world is one which is centred on and draws its inspiration from the Eucharist. It is in the celebration of the Eucharist that the kingdom is realised, through the celebration of the liberating death and resurrection of Jesus. It is in the Eucharist that Jesus prepares us to go out in service. Living the kingdom means "giving ourselves up", as Jesus did, so that in our world there may be life and authentic life.

It is within the sharing and celebration of the Eucharist that we "become one body" through the power of the Holy Spirit. Celebrating the Eucharist inspires us to ensure that the true unity of humankind in Christ becomes a reality in our day. Celebrating Eucharist renews our commitment to building a more just and fraternal society, thus anticipating that kingdom of justice, love and peace, for which all humankind longs.

The service that is at the heart of priestly ministry is a service of pointing to Jesus and in a special way celebrating the Eucharist in which the self-giving love of Jesus becomes really present in our midst in his body and blood given up for us and for all.

It is the Eucharist that constructs the Church. It is in the celebration of the Eucharist that we become Church. Church is a gift given to us, not something of our own construction. Church is the fruit of the gratuitous love of God which becomes visible in Jesus Christ, who loved us first and who died for us and rose again so that we can have life.

Eucharist is the apex, the highest expression of Christian existence and it is the bond which links faith and life. We celebrate the Eucharist "in memory of me". Our priesthood, our entire Christian existence assume their deepest expression when they too become the celebration of the "memory of Jesus Christ".

It is only in Jesus Christ, in Christ that we can we know who we really are. It is when we translate "the memory of Jesus" into the concrete actions of our lives that we know best who we are ourselves. If Jesus offers himself in sacrifice, then our lives too must be sacrifice. If he is the crucified one, then we know that the way of the cross is our way also. If Jesus gives himself up for us, then we know that we cannot live our lives just thinking of how we can affirm ourselves. We must rather allow the saving, gratuitous, self-giving love of Jesus work through us. Recognising and accepting

Jesus in his divine origins brings into our life light and grace and truth in their fullness. Eucharist and life belong together.

Without the Eucharist there is no Church. The Church cannot be reduced to being just a group of like-minded persons who profess a common ideology or who think that we should somehow be good and lead a good life. The Church is especially the communion of those who share in prayer, in charity and in the breaking of bread. It is the place where we grow in the likeness of Jesus as we encounter his saving power present in the Eucharist until the end of time.

The priest is the one charged to ensure that the Church can celebrate the saving actions of Jesus Christ, "in memory of me" and in "the person of Christ". This is a mission that only the priest is called to carry out, a mission which is not just a job but which becomes part of the very identity of the priest.

In this mission we find a special model and support in Mary, Mother of Priests. She was there, when the Church was established in its sacramental structure, as blood and water flow from the side of the dying Jesus. From that moment on, she is given in that mystical relationship of Mother to the entire Church, for all generations, in all circumstances.

Mary was there at the Wedding Feast of Cana, the first occasion in which we encounter together in the Gospels that group, Mary and the disciples, on which he would build his Church. Jesus performs his first miraculous action, which John calls "a sign by which Jesus revealed his glory" and which when read attentively contains indications of the newness of the mission of Jesus.

Mary was also present with the apostles, as they waited in prayer after the Ascension of Jesus for the coming of the Spirit, the Spirit which confirmed them in their missionary, evangelising vocation within the Church, the Spirit which changed then and gave them strength to bring the word of Jesus to the ends of the earth, into the culture of every part of the world and of every generation.

Mary is still today with our Church as it is charged to witness to Jesus in a culture where the presence of God is constantly being pushed back into the corners of public life and also into a position of less relevance in the lives and the hearts of many individuals. She accompanies the apostles of today in the New Evangelisation. As at Pentecost she is there with us encouraging us to be present in our secularised culture, witnessing through the integrity of our lives to the love of Jesus through works of service and of evangelisation. She sustains us to be present in that world untouched by worldliness.

Few better than Frank Duff understood how to follow Mary in her humility. In a world where celebrity and outward demonstration of wealth, possession and power are too often the characteristics of our day, part of our witness must be to reject the false security of such sham and witness to a Jesus Christ who showed his love and his identity in humbling himself. The style of our priestly living must shun any form of arrogance or display of power.

May Mary, the Mother of the Church, enhance our ministry and place it ever more authentically at the service of her Son and of the human family, the "all", for whom her Son gave himself.

2. PRIESTS AND LAITY IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION



Monsignor Joseph Murphy, Secretariat of State, Vatican, and Priest of the Diocese of Cloyne

Last October, when Pope Benedict XVI met the Irish Bishops during their *ad limina* visit, he spoke, among other things, of the challenge of preaching the Gospel today. In his address, he urged them to be bold in speaking to people "of the joy that comes from following Christ and living according to his commandments". Since, as the Pope put it, the Church's "counter-cultural witness" is often misunderstood "as something backward and negative in today's society", he added that "it is important to emphasise the good news, the life-giving and life-enhancing message of the Gospel", and he stressed the need to overcome the idea that Catholicism is merely a "collection of prohibitions"¹. In this way, he gave a blueprint for taking up the challenge of new evangelisation in the present context.

1. What is evangelisation?

Let us begin by taking a look at the word "evangelisation". It is connected with the Greek word for "Gospel", *euangelion*, which literally means "good news" or "glad tidings". "Evangelisation", then, means making known these glad tidings. The term *euangelion* builds on two pre-Christian foundations which are brought together and given their specific Christian meaning in the activity of Jesus Christ.

The first is the message of joy proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah: glad tidings are brought to the poor (Is 61:1). The poor here are the faithful Israelites who have suffered for God's sake and remained steadfast through all the catastrophes of history.

The second foundation is a non-Jewish one. In the kingdoms of the Orient and later in the Roman empire, *euangelion* meant the news of the new ruler's accession to the throne. He is the one who will usher in a new age of peace, justice and well-being; his existence and action are "gospel", a renewal of the world and history. The emperor's proclamations

¹ Address to the Irish Bishops, 28 October 2006.

are *euangelion*; they are called joyful because they come from the one who holds the world together².

The Gospel of Jesus radically transforms this political theology. Jesus begins his preaching with a ringing summons to conversion and faith: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1:15). In his preaching the notions of "Gospel" and "Kingdom" are very close. Jesus assures his hearers that God is near; he is present and within calling distance. This is, in fact, the most important thing that Christianity has to offer: the possibility of entering into a relationship of friendship with God himself.

At the heart of the preaching of the kingdom is the message that God has made himself close in Jesus himself. Jesus is the kingdom, the saving presence of God. The Gospel is Jesus himself, and it embraces all that he is, says and does. The message of the kingdom is fulfilled in the great mystery of Easter, the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, through which we are saved and drawn into a definitive relationship of friendship and sonship with God. Since Easter, the method of evangelisation has essentially been to tell people what we now read in the Gospels about Jesus Christ and his saving work. To evangelise means to acquaint people with Jesus as we come to know him through the Gospels.

The then Cardinal Ratzinger sets out a possible approach to new evangelisation in a talk given to catechists in December 2000³. He begins by referring to the basic questions of life which we all face: How can the full potential of my life be realised? How does one learn the art of living? What is the path to true happiness? He then says: "To evangelise means: to reveal this path – to teach the art of complete living". At the outset of his public ministry Jesus announces that he came to evangelise the poor (Lk 4:18), by which he means, according to Ratzinger, "I have come to respond to the fundamental question of your existence. I am here to show you the path of life, the path to happiness. I am, in fact, that path". The Cardinal goes on to say: "The deepest poverty is not material poverty but spiritual poverty: the inability to be joyful, the conviction that life is absurd and contradictory". This spiritual poverty is all too common at a time of hitherto unknown material prosperity. It is extremely damaging at the personal level and consequently at the level of society. The inability to be joyful arises from and leads to the inability to love. It produces dissatisfaction with life, jealousy and greed, all of which are devastating for the lives of individuals and the world. This is why we are in need of a new evangelisation. As the Cardinal puts it, "when the art of living remains unknown, nothing else functions rightly".

2. Challenges to the work of evangelisation

If we are to evangelise effectively and convincingly, we need to recover the conviction that the Gospel of Jesus Christ

² Joseph Ratzinger, "Evangelisation, Catechesis and Catechism", in *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism: Sidelights on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), pp. 38-39; idem, "Faith as Trust and Joy – Evangelium", in *Principles of Catholic Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), pp. 78-79.

³ Address to the Irish Bishops, 28 October 2006.

is the true path of life, which brings light and joy. However, we face serious obstacles. Among these are the following: (1) Christianity because of its demands and impositions is often perceived as a hindrance rather than a path to joy; (2) while Christianity claims to possess the objective truth about human existence, many believe that there is no absolute truth or, if there is, it is unattainable; (3) Christianity preaches a message of salvation but many today neither understand what salvation is nor feel that they need to be saved. Consequently, they are indifferent to the Christian message.

2.1 Joy

Among those who object to Christianity as an enemy of joy, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is particularly significant. In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche affirms the values of life and the realities of the world in which we live, and condemns Christian morality, with its emphasis on the heavenly kingdom and its prohibitions, as a "capital crime against life", a denial of this world's joys⁴. Nietzsche rejected Christian morality because he saw it as an expression of the resentment felt by those who envied the uninhibited actions of the strong and, consequently, as a kind of "herd morality" inimical to man's vital forces and his joy.

Some years back, while still a Professor at the University of Regensburg, the present Pontiff, referring to Nietzsche's objections, argued that far from being the enemy of joy, Christianity is the path to the only true and authentic joy. If a person is to be joyful he must enjoy a certain inner harmony, and this can only come about if he knows that he is loved by someone. In order to live, not only does a man's physical needs have to be met but also his basic longing to be appreciated and loved. Indeed, "one cannot become *wholly* man in any other way than by being loved, by letting oneself be loved"⁵.

Human experience teaches us that this is true. A child in his mother's arms responds to her smile and is happy. Without his mother's love he would pine away. However, merely human love is frequently mixed with elements of self-interest and is ultimately fragile. Even the most perfect love runs up against the separation of death. On its own, human love does not suffice to ensure that deeper lasting joy born of the knowledge that life is worth living.

We need a love that can withstand all the vicissitudes of life, a love that assures us that we are loved not because of anything we have or could give, but simply because we are. The question then arises: what does it mean to love? According to Joseph Ratzinger, to love someone means to be able to say to him or to her not simply with words but with one's whole being: "Yes, it is good that you exist"⁶.

⁴ The text is published in *Inside the Vatican* 13/5 (May 2005): 103-107⁴ Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, in *Werke*, vol. 15 (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1899ff), p. 327.

⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, revised edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), p. 267.

⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, "Faith as Trust and Joy", p. 80; cf. Josef Pieper, "On Love", in *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), p. 164.

However, to be completely satisfactory, the love that gives me the courage to go on living must be based on truth. It must be possible to answer affirmatively the question: "Is it truly good that I exist?". Otherwise, the love which keeps me in existence will turn out to be no more than a tragic deception. Thus, so apparently simple an act as liking myself, of being at one with myself, actually raises the question of the whole universe. Love alone is of no avail: it needs truth on its side. "Only when love and truth are in harmony can man know joy."⁷

Only God can give us this kind of assurance. This is why we need to hear once again the good news of Christianity: God has brought us into existence, not because he needed us or because we could give him something, but simply out of love. Pope Benedict emphasised this truth in his homily at the Mass for the Inauguration of his Pontificate: "We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed; each of us is loved; each of us is necessary."

What is more, even when we sinned, God did not abandon us but sent his Son to save us. Christ's death on the Cross is the supreme manifestation of the Father's love for us and his resurrection teaches us that love truly overcomes death. As Ratzinger puts it, "God finds man so important that he himself has suffered for man."⁸ The Cross is at the heart of the Gospel, for it is the definitive approval of our existence; if God loves us to this point, then we are truly loved. Even as the message of the Cross, the Gospel is glad tidings for one who believes, "the only glad tidings that destroy the ambiguity of all other joys and make them worthy to be joy. Christianity is, by its very nature, joy—the ability to be joyful."⁹

All forms of evangelisation should aim at leading others to discover the joy which is found in Christ, the joy of our faith. In response to the spiritual poverty afflicting so many of our contemporaries and to the fundamental questions which everyone must face about meaning, life and happiness, we must help others to see where true joy lies. The task of evangelisation must aim at communicating that only in Christ do we find true joy, only in him do we find the truth and love that gives life meaning and makes it worth living. As the Holy Father says: "There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him." By doing this, we are performing a service to joy, "to God's joy which longs to break into the world".¹⁰

2.2 Truth

The question of joy and the question of truth are closely connected. Today, Christianity is actually the primary

⁷ Ratzinger, "Faith as Trust and Joy", p. 80.

⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Homily at the Mass for the Inauguration of the Pontificate, 24 April 2005.

defender of the human capacity to know the truth. It shows us that we do not have to surrender to the despair of relativism, which would have us believe that there can be no access to an ultimate truth and that life does not have a final objective meaning. The Gospel teaches that there is such a thing as absolute truth and that life is a gift from God, a project with a clear objective meaning and a definite direction. Christianity stresses the harmony between God and the world, between reason and mystery, as well as giving moral guidance. Ultimately, it emphasises the identity of meaning, truth and love.

In his classic work *Introduction to Christianity*, Joseph Ratzinger puts it in these terms:

Christian faith lives on the discovery that not only is there such a thing as objective meaning but that this meaning knows me and loves me, that I can entrust myself to it like the child who knows that everything he may be wondering about is safe in the "you" of his mother.¹¹

Man needs both meaning and love in order to live; ultimately these are identical and rooted in the God of truth and love:

Meaning is the bread on which man, in the intrinsically human part of his being, subsists. Without the word, without meaning, without love he falls into the situation of no longer being able to live, even when earthly comfort is present in abundance. ... to believe as a Christian means in fact entrusting oneself to the meaning that upholds me and the world; taking it as the firm ground on which I can stand fearlessly.¹²

All of this indicates that if Christianity is to recover its persuasive force in the midst of the present crisis for mankind, it must present itself once again as the religion of truth and the religion of love.

Christian faith, not the watered-down version of the relativists or of those who reduce it to a question of feeling or personal opinion divorced from truth, but the "full and joyful faith of the New Testament, of the Church down the ages" continues to have a chance in the contemporary world.¹³ It does so because it corresponds to the nature of man, who has an unquenchable thirst for the infinite, for truth and for love. Evangelisation, then, is a matter of spreading the liberating truth and love that everyone needs.¹⁴ Truth is a gift for everyone and alienates no one. In Christ, the essential gift of truth is offered to everyone and it is our vocation, as priests or laypeople, to share this gift freely with others.

¹¹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 80.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹³ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), p. 137.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 56; 73; *idem*, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), p. 215.

2.3 Salvation

Does modern man need to be saved? With his technical skills and achievements, he seems sure of himself and self-sufficient. His basic needs are satisfied and he is able to reach a standard of living which could only be dreamt of in the past. Most people seem to content themselves with satisfying their basic desires and have objectives which are without ambition and are confined to this world. It would seem that they are indifferent to the dramatic character of human existence which the Christian faith reveals and therefore close their hearts to the great hope which it offers. The task of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in such a situation seems quite daunting indeed. How can we communicate the Gospel message of salvation to someone who does not even feel the need of it?

In point of fact, no one can really escape the fundamental questions of human existence: What is the point of it all? What is the meaning of my life? How can my life be a success? Furthermore, despite man's achievements, he continues to suffer from sickness, hunger, oppression, violence and poverty, to say nothing of the terrifying loneliness, the slavery to alcohol or drugs, the fear in the face of all that threatens us in daily life or the sense of meaninglessness which continue to afflict so many people in our affluent society. In addition, man faces all sorts of divisions and tensions within himself and in his relations with others. While seeking to do good, to be generous and to develop an authentic existence in freedom, he runs into all kinds of obstacles, ranging from his limitations and ingrained bad habits to his inability to do what is truly good and noble. Finally, in some sense, everyone seeks something absolute, whatever name we may give to it. We all seek happiness, fulfilment and love; we want to be assured that our lives have meaning and that death does not have the last word. However, we cannot achieve this by ourselves. The human condition, marked as it is by alienation, suffering, evil, limitation, finiteness, contingency and sin, indicates why we are in radical need of liberation and reconciliation, in short, of salvation.

What then is salvation? The Greek word for salvation, *sotria*, has a broad meaning: it can signify physical health, social well-being, psychological health or religious salvation. In the Christian tradition, salvation has two essential dimensions. On the one hand, it signifies deliverance from suffering and evil (*Erlösung*); on the other, it signifies the granting of a decisive good, the fullness of life (*Heil*). To live fully means to live in freedom and love, to know that one's life has a definitive meaning, to satisfy one's deepest desires and to find happiness. The question of salvation ultimately concerns the success or failure of one's life. As man cannot bring about his own salvation, he must receive it from elsewhere.

An authentic message of salvation must be capable of giving meaning to our life in the here and now. It must also be capable of overcoming our inner tensions and bringing about reconciliation with others, with the world around us and with God. It must also provide an answer to the problem of death. If these conditions are not met, then the message of salvation is nothing more than opium for the people.

The Christian message of salvation is centred on Christ's saving work. It assures us that we are already radically saved, here and now, from the evil that affects us and from that which we commit, provided that we are willing to

receive this salvation in faith and draw the necessary consequences for our manner of living.¹⁵ God also saves us from sin, which is nothing less than a rejection of God's gifts and a true waste of human freedom. This message of salvation does not tell us that we will escape suffering and death, but it does indicate that we can transform these painful realities, as Christ did, and make them truly fruitful in a definitive way. Salvation begins in this life but it has a hidden dimension which will be fully revealed in the next.

Of course, salvation is not something automatic: we are free to accept or reject the gift that Christ offers to us. Christ does not force salvation on us. He respects our freedom and in inviting us into a relationship of friendship with him, he asks us to accept the gift of salvation, which overcomes our alienation and sets us upon the path of meaning, fulfilment and happiness.

Today, no less than two thousand years ago, Christ continues to provide the answer to the questions of meaning, salvation and ultimate happiness that we all ask. Christ is the true answer to people's deepest aspirations; he is the one "who died and rose so that God might dwell among us and give us the truth, love and joy for which we are all yearning".¹⁶ Christ's saving work is the source of authentic joy. Joy arises from knowing the true face of God and the ultimate meaning of life, which Christ reveals. It flows from coming into contact with God's goodness and love, made known by Christ, especially through his death and resurrection. By adoring God and entering into his service, we experience true joy and happiness. This joy, as the Pope emphasised, is meant to be shared: "Anyone who has discovered Christ must lead others to him. A great joy cannot be kept to oneself. It has to be passed on".¹⁷

3. A task for priests and laity

Whether we are priests or laity, the task of evangelisation is nothing other than that of sharing the joy of belonging to Christ, of being Christian. On the day of their ordination, priests usually distribute a little card, normally containing a pious image and a verse from Scripture which has a particular significance for them. When the present Pope was ordained in Freising Cathedral on 29 June 1951, he chose the following verse: "We aim not to lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy" (2 Cor 1:24). At the inaugural Mass of his Pontificate, Pope Benedict returned to this theme, pointing out that the purpose of the priest's life is "to reveal God to men" and the pastoral ministry is ultimately "a service to joy, to God's joy which longs to break into the world".

In 1988, Cardinal Ratzinger published a collection of homilies on priestly spirituality entitled *Ministers of your Joy*. The priest must first discover that joy for himself and he can only do so by making the Gospel message completely his

¹⁵ Cf. Bernard Sesboüe, *Jésus-Christ, l'unique médiateur. Essai sur la rédemption et le salut*, tome 1 (Paris: Desclée, 1988), p. 24.

¹⁶ Address at Cologne Cathedral, 18 August 2005.

¹⁷ Homily at the Concluding Mass of World Youth Day, 21 August, 2005.

own in an intimate relationship of friendship with Christ. The priest's joy arises from placing his trust in the Lord, no matter what trials and tribulations he may have to endure, from his confidence that, despite the paucity of visible results, his work will bear fruit for the growth of God's kingdom, and from his awareness that to be a priest is both the greatest demand and the greatest gift. His task is to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to the world through word and sacrament, through the witness of his own life and through generous openness to all that the Lord asks of him.

The priest, of course, is not alone in the task of evangelisation. Lay people too have their proper part to play, but this is very much dependent on their concrete situation and their possibilities and abilities. Their commitment to evangelisation is all the more urgent today, when so many of our contemporaries seek happiness and meaning but do not know where to find it. Priests have the responsibility of encouraging and helping lay people to take up this challenge. Some of the laity have important visible roles in the liturgy as readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist or choir members, for which they should be properly trained. However, every lay person is called to the basic responsibility of bearing witness in the world to the joy of the Gospel. This opens up an enormous apostolate, ranging from handing on the faith in the family and the school to various forms of voluntary work, from intellectual and artistic activity to defence of life, from healthcare to work on behalf of drug addicts, the poor and those who find themselves in any kind of need. One could say that there are practically as many ways of sharing in the work of evangelising, that is, of sharing the joy of the Gospel of Christ, as there are people. In recent times, many young men and women have taken up the challenge in creative ways: their role is vital, for, after all, who better than a young person can evangelise another young person?

The work of evangelisation is the responsibility of each and every one of us, whether we are priests or laypeople. However, if we are to engage effectively in this task, we must begin as Christ tells us to: we must first repent and believe in the Gospel. That is to say, we must abandon our own preconceptions, prejudices and self-sufficiency in order to give ourselves wholeheartedly to the Lord. We must believe in him, we must place our trust and confidence in him, we must grow in our knowledge and love of him. How are we to evangelise? By telling the glad tidings of what God has done for us, by responding to what he wants of us. And what does he want from us? To become loving and joyful persons in the image of God himself, and to spread the radiance of that love and joy around us.¹⁸

4. Rejoice, o Daughter of Zion!

As Pope Benedict emphasises, the history of Christianity begins with the word "Rejoice!".¹⁹ This was the greeting addressed to Mary by the angel Gabriel when he made known to her that she would be the mother of the long-awaited

¹⁸ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium, An Interview with Peter Seewald* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), p. 283.

¹⁹ Cf. Homily at the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, 18 December 2005.

Saviour (Lk 1:28). While at one level the word "*chaire*" used here is simply the usual form of greeting employed in the Hellenistic world, it also has a deeper meaning: it is an invitation to joy. St Luke, in using the term "*chaire*", is deliberately alluding to the messianic joy proclaimed in the Daughter of Zion oracles found in the prophets Zephaniah and Zechariah.

The Daughter of Zion, who is a symbol of Israel, is generally evoked in connection with the prophetic announcement of the mystery of election and covenant, the mystery of God's love for Israel. The Daughter of Zion is to rejoice, because God has cast out her enemies and is in her midst (Zeph 3:14-15; Zech 2:10). She is to rejoice greatly and shout aloud, for her king comes to her, triumphant and victorious, "humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech 9:9). In this way, the prophets encourage Israel to look forward in joyful expectation. Her joy is born of her trust in God which is solidly founded on his saving works in the past, his consoling presence amid the trials of the present and his promises regarding the future.

Israel's hope is fulfilled in the angel's words to Mary. She is the Daughter of Zion: to her the Lord will come to take up his dwelling. She is the true Zion towards whom all the long-held hopes of Israel are directed: indeed, she is the true Israel, in whom the old and new covenants, Israel and the Church, are inseparably one.²⁰ Hence, the Church learns what she is and what she is meant to be by looking to Mary, who is God's dwelling place, just as the Church must be.

Furthermore, Mary is the image of expectant mankind:

As the true "daughter of Zion", Mary is the image of the Church, the image of believing man, who can come to salvation and to himself only through the gift of love—through grace. ... She does not contest or endanger the exclusiveness of salvation through Christ; she points to it. She represents mankind, which as a whole is in expectation and which needs this image all the more when it is in danger of giving up waiting and putting its trust in doing, which—indispensable as it is—can never fill the void that threatens man when he does not find that absolute love which gives him meaning, salvation, all that is truly necessary in order to live.²¹

Mary's great hymn of joy, the *Magnificat*, which is inspired by numerous Old Testament passages, especially the song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10), celebrates the goodness and mercy of God to individuals and to Israel as a whole, emphasising that God comes to the help of the poor and simple, rather than to the proud and self-sufficient. When we pray the *Magnificat*, especially in the Evening Prayer of the Church, we too, like Mary, recall the great deeds that God has done in history and in our own lives. As we treasure these things in our hearts, may we, like Mary, be inspired once again to tell everyone of the hope and the joy that is ours.

²⁰ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church's Marian Belief* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), p. 43.

²¹ Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 280.

3. WHAT THE PRIEST MEANS TO THE LAY APOSTOLATE



Dr Finola Kennedy, Economist

Introduction

When I was preparing this talk, I stumbled on the following sentence in a letter written almost fifty years ago by Frank Duff to a legionary in Italy, 'Nothing could be more important than the obtaining of opportunity to talk to groups of Priests.'¹ So I have been granted a special opportunity; I am immensely grateful, if daunted, that you have given it to me.

Irish people have traditionally been close to their priests and sometimes even to their bishops ! On 24th June 1681, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, Oliver Plunkett, in a letter to his fellow-prisoner, Father Maurus Corker, in Newgate Jail, spoke with pride of the constancy of his brother bishops:

They might have saved their lives by going overseas, but the Irish prelates are resolved to die rather than to forsake their flocks. Forristal Kildariensis had departed but that I hindered him, for if the captains will fly, 'tis in vain to exhort the single soldiers to stand in battle²

There is a world of wisdom in what Oliver Plunkett says - it is a waste of time exhorting the foot soldiers unless the captains hold firm and lead. The bishop is vital to his priest; the priest is vital to the layperson. I myself am utterly convinced of the necessity of the priest if the laity are to function properly. I think the Church is fully alive only when the priest and laity work together. To encourage the laity, to help them to gain knowledge of their religion, to mobilise and to lead them in the apostolic work of the Church, that is what the priest means to the lay apostolate.

Much of this paper will focus on examples of how the laity have been encouraged and mobilised by priests - some well known, some relatively unknown. So we will be looking at proven realities as distinct from theories. But first a little bit of theory with a brief reference to Vatican 2.

¹ Letter from Frank Duff to Marie Victorie Zacherl, 22 March, 1958.

² Desmond Forristal, *Saint Oliver Plunkett*, p. 12.

Priests and People

Dealing with the Foundations of the Lay Apostolate, the *Decree on the Laity* of the Second Vatican Council says:

From the fact of their union with Christ the Head flow the laymen's right and duty to be apostles. Inserted as they are in the Mystical Body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate.....

The perfect model of apostolic spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles.... who co-operated in an entirely unique way in the Saviour's work.

And in the *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* we are told that priests:

..... should unite their efforts with those of the lay faithful and conduct themselves among them after the example of the Master.

The Pauline analogy of the human body provides a helpful image to depict the unity of the Church, the Body of Christ. The role of the priest is analogous to that of the human head, and thus to the Mystical Head. The priest is the local Christ. It is he who brings us, above all, what Frank Duff calls, 'the mighty Mass'.³ For the apostolate to be fruitful, the Council insists, priests and laity must be united.

In an address to Italian legionaries on 30 October 1982, Pope John Paul 11 singled out two aspects of the legionary vocation: firstly 'to be a leaven' and secondly to be so 'with the spirit and solicitude of Mary'. The Pope said, 'Your proper vocation as lay people, that is the vocation to be a leaven in the People of God, a Christian inspiration in the modern world, and *to bring the priest to the people*, [my ital.] is eminently ecclesial'. The Pope also said, 'For its birth and growth, apostolic work looks to her who gave birth to Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Where the mother is, there too is the Son. When one moves away from the Mother, sooner or later he ends up keeping distant from the son as well!'⁴ The Handbook stresses that:

[The Legion] apostolate is built upon the fact that the main channels of grace are the Mass and the sacramental system, of which the priest is the essential minister ... It follows that a first principle of legionary action must be the *bringing of the priest to the people*, [my ital.] not always in person - for that may be impossible - but everywhere in influence and understanding.⁵

³ León Ó Broin, *Frank Duff A Biography*, Dublin 1982, p. 29.

⁴ Quoted in Handbook, 1993 edition, p. 5.

⁵ Handbook, p. 61.

When we look at the work of the Second Vatican Council we find that it is directed towards 'the mobilisation of the people of God'. From the Council we know to beware of regarding the lay apostolate as something separated from the priestly apostolate. This would be equivalent of organising two separate bodies - one of officers, the other of rank and file. Officers and rank and file denote a difference of function, but they must be united and help each other in achieving their common purpose. In a nutshell the Council tells us that the priest and laity must work together in order that the Church, the Body of Christ, may fulfil its mission to preach the gospel to every creature. Without the priest there can be no fullness of the lay apostolate. Without the laity there can be no fullness of the priesthood for the priest must have members just as Christ himself had members. Without the twelve, without the seventy-two, above all without Mary, there would be no Church, no Body of Christ in the modern world. Without the priest the vast potential of the laity remains untapped. A great reservoir remains just that - if it does not flow into life-giving circulation. Instead it stagnates.

What is the apostolate about which we are talking? There is but a single apostolate, a single central purpose to the Church, to bring the Gospel to every person. Immediately before his Ascension, in what has been called his last will and testament, Christ said to his disciples, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation'(Mk 16:15). The knowledge of Christ and the call to personal sanctification are to be brought to all. When Christ said all, he meant all. The fruit of his Passion must not be wasted. Frank Duff writes:

That Christian commission drastically drives us out to people everywhere - to the least ones, to the greatest ones, to those near, to those remote, to the ordinary people, to the wickedest, to the farthest shack, to all afflicted creatures, to the diabolical types, to the loneliest lighthouse, to the leper, to the forgotten sort, to the victims of drink and vice, to the dangerous classes, to the dwellers in caves and caravans, to those on the battlefield, to those who hide, to the avoided places, to the lowest den, to the icy wastes, to the sun-baked desert, to the densest jungle, to the dismal swamp, to the uncharted island, to the undiscovered tribe, out into the absolute unknown to find if there is someone living there, right on to the ends of the earth where the rainbow rests! No one must evade our search lest the gentle Jesus frown upon us⁶

A striking example of how the Legion of Mary attempts to fulfil this command of Christ's is through the Peregrinatio Pro Christo (PPC). The first 'peregrinatio' took place in 1958 when Hugh Brady, a student of architecture together with a small group of fellow students took summer jobs in England. At the end of nine weeks they had nine people under instruction to enter the Church. The Legion Concilium then took up the idea with the object of reaching out to everyone and the Peregrinatio became a regular feature of subsequent Legion life with remarkable results, for example in the former Soviet Union. Each year teams of Peregrini work all over the world.

Writing about the Church in Ireland around the time the PPC was started, that is fifty years ago - a time when many

⁶ Handbook, p. 308.

assumed the Church was strong, Duff saw the picture differently, 'Our failures arose out of a practising Catholicism, out of a sufficiency of priests, out of a total control over education, and a very great influence over legislation.'⁷ He goes on to propose a theory as to what is wrong:

There is a gap in the Catholic system, and at such a pivotal point as to exert a crippling effect. It is that by and large the priest is without members; and that the priest without members is in the same position as Our Lord Himself without members. He is immobilised, deprived of his intended means of action.⁸

Examples of Priests

Let us turn now to the example of priests who drew a nucleus of laity around them in order to make them sharers in the apostolate.

Over one hundred and fifty years ago, an English priest, John Henry Newman, was putting in place the foundations for the growth of the role of the laity in the Church in our own times. When Newman became a Catholic and was ordained a priest he considered at length what form of life would be most appropriate for himself and his close associates and fellow converts. He chose the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, which had been founded in the sixteenth century. According to one of Newman's priests, Father Stephen Dessain, 'Newman himself studied minutely and expounded at length the Oratorian way of life and the part it should play in forming a devout laity and effective lay apostles'. Fr. Stephen Dessain, says, 'The Oratory exists for the sake of the laity'.⁹

St. Philip had been a layman until age 36. After ordination, he joined the group of secular priests who were chaplains to the church of St. Jerome, opposite the English College in Rome. Every evening Philip gathered his 7 or 8 lay disciples in his room to read and discuss the New Testament or some spiritual book and then to pray silently for half an hour. The numbers grew and the group transferred to a large room above one of the aisles of the Church of St. Jerome, the first 'oratory'. There were also afternoon meetings at which Philip or one of his lay disciples preached. Among the fruits of this lay preaching and prayer was active charitable work in neglected hospitals and elsewhere, but the chief fruit was the fulfilment of Philip's aim of making people 'saints in their own homes'. This is very similar to the Legion objective of personal sanctification through the service of others. Philip animated his lay group and gradually renewed the Church in Rome in the sixteenth century. Newman says that St. Philip, like St. Paul in his Epistles, 'instead of insisting on science and system, addresses himself chiefly to the hearts of his disciples, and introduces doctrine, not so much for its own sake, as for practical purposes'. Oratorians took care of the Birmingham Workhouse and the Birmingham

⁷ Frank Duff, "The Priest must have Members", *Mary Shall Reign*, Dublin, 1961. p. 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹ Stephen Dessain, *Cardinal Newman, the Oratory and the Laity*, undated, p.3.

Gaol.

Newman wished to produce lay apostles. He believed that personal influence is the key means of evangelisation or of propagating religious truth. Newman writes, 'A man finds himself in a definite place; he grows up in it and into it; he draws persons around him; they know him, he knows them; thus it is ideas are born which are to live, that works begin which are to last'. In an oft quoted passage, Newman went on to say, 'I want an intelligent well-instructed laity ... I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason ... to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism'.¹⁰ Before we can spread the Good News we need to know about it. Recent surveys indicate a pathetic level of religious knowledge among those surveyed, despite years of education within schools under Catholic influence. I would suggest that if every parish had a Patrician Group, supported by the parish clergy, adult religious education would be vastly improved.

Newman realised the importance of the laity by going back to the early church. He wrote, 'In the earliest age, it was simply the living spirit of the myriads of the faithful, none of them known to fame, who received from the disciples of our Lord, and husbanded so well and circulated so widely, and transmitted so faithfully, generation after generation, the once delivered apostolic faith'.¹¹ In his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, Newman declares, 'In all times the laity have been the measure of the Catholic spirit'. In the Handbook of the Legion of Mary Frank Duff uses this and many other quotations from Newman. Newman was an important influence on Duff who possessed many volumes of Newman's writings. Towards the end of his life, Frank Duff wrote as follows in a letter to Father Flood, 'I have always been profoundly affected throughout my life by the writings of Newman. I have read him extensively'.¹² In one of his journals Duff wrote, 'I ought to read every word of Newman's'.¹³

I would now like to give a few examples from Legion of Mary history of what it meant to the lay apostolate and therefore to the Church when priests *mobilised* and *encouraged* the laity.

On 7 September, 1933, James Moynagh from Ardagh, later the first bishop of Calabar in Nigeria, founded the all African Praesidium of the Immaculate Conception. It was the twelfth anniversary of the Legion's simple beginnings in Dublin. It was Bishop Moynagh's judgment, based on experience that 'when the spiritual director is enthusiastic, the Legion can work wonders'. Some years ago I attended a lecture in Dublin for World Communications Day. The speaker was Francis Cardinal Arinze. In his opening sentence he expressed pleasure being in Dublin, 'the home of the Legion of Mary'. Once again we are privileged to have Cardinal Arinze, a son of Nigeria, the country in which James Moynagh worked, in our midst.

¹⁰ John Henry Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, XVIII, p. 504.

¹¹ John Henry Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 1, p. 209.

¹² Letter from Frank Duff to Father Flood, 11 May, 1956.

¹³ This was confirmed to me by Phyllis McGuinness.

In 1936, a Spanish Vincentian, Father Manuel Gracia, founded a Praesidium with twelve members in Manila. When war erupted in the Pacific in December 1941, there were twelve Praesidia in Manila. Twenty-five years later there were 6,000 Praesidia in the Philippines and the Church in the Philippines was revitalised.

When Archbishop (later Cardinal) Riberi, became Apostolic Internuncio to China in 1946 one of his first ambitions was to start the Legion of Mary there. In the 1930s when he had worked in the Nunciature in Dublin he got to know Frank Duff and the Legion. As Apostolic Delegate for the British-ruled territories in East and West Africa, Riberi supported the Legion there, in particular the work of Edel Quinn who spent seven years and seven months spreading the Legion in the vast dioceses of East Africa and Mauritius. In Mauritius, Jean Margéot, then a young priest, later Cardinal, was an ardent supporter of the Legion of Mary.

The China story is exceptional. A central character in the story is Fr. Aedan McGrath, one of three priest brothers, sons of the assassinated King's Counsel and County Court Judge, William McGrath. Fr. McGrath was a doughty rugby player, despite being pint-sized. In its account of the junior cup team in 1921, the *Belvederian* reports of Aedan, who played three-quarter that season, 'Runs straight, has a wonderful swerve and a deadly tackle'. He claimed that he got his vocation on the rugby pitch. When Belvedere was defeated in a Schools' Cup Final, McGrath said his anguish was such that he asked himself was rugby *the* most important thing in the world. Or could anything be more important ?

In 1924 Aedan McGrath joined the Columban Fathers which had been established in 1918 specifically with the Chinese mission in mind. He was ordained on 21 December 1929 and six months later was on his way to China, where he would spend sixteen years before returning home on vacation. Following a couple of years around Hanyang, Bishop Galvin, founder of the Columban Fathers and his Bishop, sent him to T'sien Kiang, where he lived with a Chinese family, similar, he said, to the family in *Wild Swans*. He served his 24 missions by walking; he felt helpless, one priest and so many millions of people. He asked his Bishop for another priest and Bishop Galvin replied by sending him a copy of the Handbook of the Legion of Mary.

Father McGrath said, 'In those days we obeyed bishops! I called in six men with no particular qualifications. I did not think it would work, I intended to give the book back to the bishop when it failed. To my utter amazement, those men were able to do many things that I could not do. The Lord was telling me that if I wanted to get anywhere, I must use lay people.' Fr. McGrath grew to love the Handbook and to know its every word. A defining mark of Fr. McGrath and of all great Legion priests is the commitment to operate the Legion system as set forth in the Handbook. This is a matter of first importance. The system described in the Handbook is the Legion system. Fr. McGrath had discovered that the Legion is the priest's organisation *par excellence*. Around this time Frank Duff expressed these sentiments in a letter to Father Cleary, a priest in Australia:

Another most important feature of the Legion is that it does not regard itself as a Lay organisation, with Lay spelt in aggressive capital letters. That species of Catholic Action seems to suggest a separateness from and independence of the Priests. In the Legion as you know, the priest is an absolutely essential part. He is not a mere chaplain. He regards himself as a Legionary, and the ideas

of Clerical and Lay do not enter the minds of Legionaries. They are all one army. The Priests are the officers; the lay-people are the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers.¹⁴

During the "rape of Nanking" in 1939, four thousand Japanese soldiers entered Fr. McGrath's town. "The women ran to me looking for protection. I was supposed to keep the Japanese army out. God directed me to one particular soldier. We started talking about movies. He asked me if I liked Loretta Young, and I said, 'She's a personal friend of mine! I had met her in Hollywood. He wrote something and sealed it and put it on the door. The soldiers all saluted and stayed away."

But McGrath and his colleagues were expelled from their parishes. 'We were away two and a half years in Hanyang. There was no Mass and no priest in my parish during that time. I felt that the parish would fade away without me and the Legion of Mary would not last any time. On my return in 1944 to the parish, I found my parish running smoothly without me. Babies were baptised, marriages were witnessed and all the needs of the Catholics were dealt with in so far as they could, by my five Praesidia of the Legion of Mary.'

Back in Dublin in December 1946 Fr. McGrath picked up a copy of de Montfort's *True Devotion* from a Legion of Mary book barrow, and it made a deep impression. He soon returned to China, where he met Archbishop Riberi. Riberi knew that the Communist takeover was coming. He had met Edel Quinn in Africa, and reckoned that the Legion was what he needed now. Fr. McGrath was instructed by Riberi to start the Legion all over China. 'Within half an hour, the first Praesidium was formed in what was probably the most sophisticated university in China at the time in Shanghai. From Shanghai, I went to central China, to Hankow, and did the same. Then up to Beijing. Within two years we had two thousand magnificent groups. The work was not lost on Mao Tse Tung. He sent out people to search and find how the Church was still alive. He called the Legion "*Public Enemy No. 1.*"'

When the communists gained power priests connected with the Legion, including Fr. McGrath, were imprisoned. The Bishop of Shanghai, Ignatius Kung, spent 27 years, one-third of his life, in prison. During his incarceration and just after John Paul 11 became Pope, John Paul secretly (*in pectore*), named Kung a cardinal. The title was fully conferred when a frail Kung visited the Vatican in 1991. He was then aged ninety. According to his obituary in the *Times* of London on 13 March 2000, Kung would 'inspire thousands to offer their lives up to God! The obituary continues:

In defiance of the Government-sponsored China Catholic Patriotic Association, Kung invigorated the Legion of Mary. The Government responded by declaring it to be an illegal society that was engaged in espionage and demanded that all members either register with the Public Security Bureau and acknowledge that the legion was counter-revolutionary, or risk imprisonment.

Kung instructed his followers not to comply. with the exception of very few, the members refused to sign the registration,

¹⁴ Letter to Fr. Cleary, Australia, 16 February 1938, Concilium Archives.

choosing instead to risk arrest in the name of their bishop, their God and their Church. Hundreds of members, including many students, were arrested and sentenced to hard labour.

According to the American historian, Professor James Myers, on 14 September 1955 Radio Beijing warned that Catholics who did not withdraw from the Legion of Mary would be 'very severely punished'.¹⁵ Cardinal Kung was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1960. He was released in 1987.

On 13 March 1948 as Fr. McGrath was embarking on the establishment of the Legion of Mary in China, Frank Duff wrote a long letter to him. The following extract contains the essence of what the priest means to the Legion:

The more we think over things, the more we are intrigued by the prospect of your mission Here is a mass experiment the mobilising of an entire native people in the work of evangelising their inconceivably vast country. Furthermore it is an experiment based on the right lines, i.e., that of placing before the people from the first moment the authentic outlines of Christianity, which necessarily includes the waging of an apostolate.

Duff sees the priest as *mobilising* the people to the work of evangelisation. These are the *ipsissima verba* of the Council, twenty years in advance. Duff's letter also contains a warning, 'An inert laity is only two generations removed from non-practice. Non-practice is only two generations from non-belief'. In his *Theology of the Apostolate*, which is a commentary on the Legion Promise to the Holy Spirit, Bishop (later Cardinal) Suenens speaks of an indispensable minimum of apostolic work for every Catholic. This was written in 1952.

Since the time Christ called his disciples, the priest has been the pivot of the apostolate. This was something of which Frank Duff was aware from a very early stage. One example suffices from pre-Legion days. At the time of the First World War, Duff together with his friend Joe Gabbett, an army bootmaker, became aware that Portobello (now Cathal Brugha) Barracks, then manned by the Royal Lancashire Regiment, housed many servicemen and ex-servicemen suffering from syphilis and kindred diseases. Frank decided that something should be done to bring them the comfort of human contact and maybe spiritual help. Immediately he decided to seek the interest and help of a priest. He went to the nearby Rathmines presbytery where he found Father Frank O'Loughlin. The whole scene changed. With the help of Fr. O'Loughlin, regular visits were made to the men, who, in the days of more primitive medical treatments, looked upon a bleak and probably short future. By what appears an odd chance, Fr. O'Loughlin's sister, Mrs Elizabeth Kirwan, would become the first president of the first Praesidium of the Legion of Mary.

Father Michael Toher, a diocesan priest, was present at the first Legion meeting. The meeting was arranged in response to a request to Fr. Toher and to Mr Duff by some young women that they too might engage in visitation of the cancer

¹⁵ James Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 1991, p. 140.

wards in the old South Dublin Union where men already visited. Fr. Michael Creedon, another priest of the Dublin Archdiocese, was the first Spiritual Director of the Concilium and is quoted on a number of occasions in the Handbook. He says:

The growth of what is usually designated the Lay Apostolate is a special manifestation of our modern days, possessing - were it for no other reason than the numbers concerned - infinite possibilities¹⁶

The Spiritual Directors of the Concilium of the Legion of Mary have been an exceptional group of priests. Father Creedon was followed by Fr. Toher who returned from Mexico where he had spent a time exploring a missionary vocation. Fr. Toher was succeeded by Father Donnacha Ó Floinn, a secular priest, and Professor of Irish in Maynooth. Next came Fr. Tomás O'Flynn, a Vincentian who was followed by Father Michael Brown, the Parish Priest of Clonskeagh, and then by Fr. Joseph Moran, a Dominican and a classmate of John Paul 11 when they were both students in Rome. The present spiritual director is also a Dominican, Father Bede McGregor. The only personal spiritual director that Frank Duff ever had was a Jesuit priest, Fr. Michael Browne. Duff said of Fr. Browne that 'He gave me the greatest encouragement and endorsement at all times, and until his death he always heard with delight of the growth and of the work of the Legion, and I know that it had his potent prayers.'¹⁷

The Legion Hostels, the Morning Star for men and the Regina Coeli for women, were opened in 1927 and 1930 respectively and have been open every day and every night since then. They have received the support of a number of priests, including Fr. Pádraig Ó Cochláin, Fr. Eamonn McCarthy, Fr. Michael Ross, Fr. Little, Fr. McHugh and the late Fr. John Aherne. Other priests who have played important roles in the Legion of Mary include Fr. Anselm Moynihan, O P, the promoter of the Cause of Edel Quinn, Fr. Herman Nolan, a Passionist priest and maestro with bicycles who was chaplain to the 'Sprockets', Mr Duff's cycling group, Fr. Moriarty, a pioneer of the apostolate to Russia and Fr. Gerry Ryan who at one stage had eight Praesidia in Scarriff. Fr. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp, was rightly described by his former student, Tim Pat Coogan, as an 'enabling man'. The 'Doc' who participated in Frank Duff's ecumenical initiatives with the Mercier (later the Pauline Circle) and Pillar of Fire Societies, possessed an extraordinary gift for encouragement. Archdeacon Cathal McCarthy, a former Dean of Clonliffe College and, by odd coincidence, the seventieth anniversary of whose ordination on 22 May 1937 occurs today (22 May 2007), gave lifelong service to the Legion. I have been told that he possessed a great capacity to listen carefully to the reports of all the legionaries at his Praesidium meetings. And the Legion has been the source of numerous vocations to the priesthood in Ireland and throughout the world, including Fr. O Cochláinn and Fr. Eamonn McCarthy who has done invaluable work on the Cause of Frank Duff, and is present here

¹⁶ Handbook, pp. 68-68. 12.

¹⁷ Ó Broin, *ibid.*, p. 61.

today. Despite the wonderful work of a minority, I venture to suggest that the Legion remains untried by a majority of priests in Ireland. Of the 200 Praesidia in Dublin, about one in ten, or around twenty Praesidia has a priest spiritual director. This may be because priests do not see the Legion as a priests' organisation which it is to a unique degree.

What the priest means to the lay apostolate is best summed up in a letter written by Frank Duff to the Jesuit Archbishop Van Hee in 1950:

It is not sufficient to permit people to be apostolic. It is not sufficient to permit the Legion to exist. In each case authority must throw itself in behind and endeavour to make the apostolic mechanism work. But it has to be confessed that in most places the authorities think it sufficient to allow the Legion to operate. Only too often it is given no help; and even where some help is forthcoming, it is not the determined sort of drive which is necessary. If an army were treated in war as the Legion is commonly treated, that army would win no battles; it probably would not even enter into the combat at all.¹⁸

Conclusion

I will end on a personal note. I first joined the Legion of Mary when I was a student at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. The Praesidium comprised a group of students with diverse backgrounds including one legionary from Vietnam whose family had suffered persecution because of their faith. My first Legion work was taking blind children for walks – a work well suited to students who never dreamed that they might ever suffer a disability. We had a marvellous Dominican priest as spiritual director and we went on a variety of pilgrimages by foot which were actually great fun. The seminarians who came along always seemed to be the best looking students which was a bit frustrating for some of us. When I was at UCD my sister was at Trinity and she had joined a Trinity/College of Art Praesidium and she invited me to join. The membership included a number who had attended boarding schools in England prior to Trinity as well as some interesting types from the College of Art. Fr. Tom Stack was a memorable spiritual director and he was succeeded by Fr. John Aherne. Later again in Cambridge I joined the Legion. The president had been head boy in his public school and had considered the priesthood. The only time I ever travelled by Harley Davidson was as a pillion passenger on Pat Mullen's motor bike going to my Legion meeting. Again we had a great spiritual director, a Mill Hill Father. Back in Dublin I was in a Praesidium which offered a career information service to early school leavers and their parents. Again we had an active spiritual director. For over twenty years I was not an active legionary, although I attended a Patrician Group. Some years ago I rejoined the Legion in Merrion parish where we service the Parish Bookshop, organise a Patrician Group and a Care Group and do some visitation of homes. One of my best Legion experiences was the four years which I spent as president of a junior Praesidium in Blackrock College. A memorable event was a special Mass arranged by Fr.

¹⁸ Letter from Frank Duff to Archbishop S. J. Van Hee, S. J., 6 October 1950.

Sean Farragher on 24 May 2000 to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Frank Duff's First Holy Communion when he was a schoolboy in the College.

If I were asked what difference has my association with, and membership of, the Legion of Mary meant to me, I would say that it has given me an awareness of my responsibility to share in the mission of the Church. Through a study of the Handbook and through regular attendance at Patrician meetings it has given me some knowledge of what it means to be a Catholic.

In Ireland today the Church has been in the grips of winter. At times frozen, some have turned away while others have lost heart. In soccer parlance we've sunk to the bottom of the Championship. Are there Roy Keanes among you to take us into the Premiership? In Gospel terms, 'Lord to whom shall we go?' is the question in the hearts of many as they await the call from their priests for mobilisation and encouragement to welcome the inevitable spring.



Wednesday 23 May 2007

4. PRIESTS AND LAITY – THE VISION OF FRANK DUFF



Fr. Bede McGregor O.P. Concilium Spiritual Director and Postulator for the Cause of The Servant of God Frank Duff.

I would like to begin with a quotation taken from an address given by Frank Duff in New York on the occasion of his acceptance of the annual Marianist Award from the University of Dayton, Ohio: "I am overjoyed to see such a numerous crowd, and particularly I am touched by the number of the priests who have honoured the gathering by being present. I thank them for this additional service to the Legion. We realise the utter dependence of the Legion upon the priests and therefore it is a complete satisfaction to see them here in such numbers, showing they have taken the Legion to their hearts. With that union of the priests and Legion nothing can stand in our way if our spirit be right. And why should it not be right!"

Whenever Frank Duff spoke and priests were present he would invariably begin by acknowledging their presence and thanking them. This was not just a polite formality or a form of obsequiousness but the expression of a profound reverence for the priesthood deeply rooted in his faith and theological reflection. He saw his own vocation as a layperson and the innermost reality of the Legion of Mary as intrinsically and therefore inseparably related to the vocation of the priest. And, vice versa, he saw the vocation of the priest, although different in kind, as essentially related to the vocation of the laity. Together he saw them as the divinely planned way of the most authentic and effective evangelisation. I hope this will become clearer in the course of this talk but first I too wish to thank, on behalf of Concilium and the whole Legion of Mary, all the priests here present and those who were not able to come but have shown such great understanding and commitment to the Lay Apostolate in general and the Legion of Mary in particular. An inspiring book could be written about the care and support that Frank Duff gave to many priests during his life time and now since his death the catalogue of favours given to priests at his intercession continues to grow.

Introduction

Today I wish to give a reflection on the different theological models he used to explain the relationship of priests to

the laity in the task of evangelisation. Frank Duff was not an academic theologian but I think it is worth listening to what a layperson has to say on the theme of our Conference especially since I cannot think of any theologian with his vast experience of the lay apostolate and life long passionate interest and commitment to the subject.

I propose to take the three elements in the title of our symposium separately in so far as that is possible and then show how they are related in the vision of Frank Duff. He saw the priest without the laity as isolated, ineffective, and ultimately unhappy. He wrote in his seminal work 'The Priest Must have Members': "I intend to go so far as to say that the Legion or something analogous is necessary to every priest in the sense that without it he is incomplete. Something needful to him is missing. And that missing element is so peremptory that without it his priestly role and character must suffer detriment. He will not achieve what he is supposed to be nor what he can do. He will go through life realising a mere fraction of his powers where he should be measuring the horizons. He will not have an outlet for his powers. Certainly he will accomplish a good work inasmuch as he will save his soul in a highly respectable manner, but he will not achieve his priestly mission; he will not influence the world. And what we are going to talk about is nothing less than your duty and your ability to shake and move and mould the whole world."

It would also be true of course that an apostolic organisation without some relationship to the priest would be immensely impoverished and eventually die. The very nature of the lay apostolate would be at stake without the support of the priest. The lay apostolate without the priest would be utterly unthinkable for Frank Duff. The priest represents Christ as Head of the mystical Body of Christ so it would make no sense at all for the laity to act independently of the priest. It is for this reason that the Legion will not operate in a parish without the authorisation of the parish priest nor enter a diocese without the express permission of the local Ordinary. For the moment let me sum up the position in the words of the Handbook: "This is the essential idea of the Legion apostolate. Lay it will be in bulk of membership, but working in inseparable union with the priests, and under their captaincy, and with absolute identity of interests. It will ardently seek to supplement their efforts, and to widen their place in the lives of men, so that men, receiving them, shall receive him who sent them".

Frank Duff explicitly affirmed several times that the vision of the Legion concerning the relationship between priests and laity was identical with that expressed at the Second Vatican Council and in the post-conciliar Magisterium, in words such as the following: "Consequently, the ministerial priesthood "differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful"(27). For this reason the priest is exhorted " ...to grow in awareness of the deep communion uniting him to the People of God" in order to "awaken and deepen co-responsibility in the one common mission of salvation, with a prompt and heartfelt esteem for all the charisms and tasks which the Spirit gives believers for the building up of the Church" .(28)

Above all the vision of Frank Duff concerning the priest and laity can only be understood in the context of evangelisation and the salvation of souls. Both priest and laity must be totally christocentric and the central focus of Christ is the salvation of souls. Our Lord put it categorically more than once: 'I came to save sinners.' Evangelisation is simply cooperating in the work of redemption. It is facilitating a meeting between Christ and another person, bringing

the fruits of redemption to others or again putting it very simply, it is helping others get into heaven. This must be the overwhelming focus of any priest or layperson who would wish to be apostolic. Ultimately there is no evangelisation without focusing on the salvation of souls. Whatever the immediate goals, the ultimate goal of all evangelisation must be the gaining of eternal life. The Code of Canon Law puts it very succinctly: For all activity of the Church 'the salvation of souls must always be the supreme law. '(Can.1752) This is the identity of interest between the priest and the lay apostle. Since it is true that the most characteristic virtue of the life of Christ is his zeal for souls then it follows that the characteristic virtue of his Mother will also be the salvation of souls because there is always identity of interests between them. For Frank Duff it followed that any true devotion to Mary necessarily involved active commitment to the apostolate both for priests and laity. I wish now to consider some of the models used by Frank Duff to explain the relationship between priest and laity in the work of evangelisation.

The Eucharistic Model

St. Thomas Aquinas taught that the identity and mission of the priest were essentially related to Christ in a twofold manner: to Christ in his Eucharistic Body and to Christ in his mystical Body, the Church. These two realities were also central to the life and thinking of Frank Duff. He was riveted to the Eucharistic and the Mystical Body of Christ. In 1914 at the age of 25 Frank decided to go to Mass everyday during Lent. At the end of that Lent he decided to go to daily Mass for the rest of his life. In 1917 he started the League of Daily Mass and personally recruited 1176 men and women to commit themselves to daily Mass. When he founded the Legion of Mary in 1921 this apostolate of encouraging people to daily Mass and Holy Communion was absorbed into the Legion. Because of the diverse situations and opportunities of Legionaries there is no obligation in this matter. Nevertheless the Legion urges and implores its members to assist frequently - everyday if at all possible - at Mass and to receive Holy Communion.

The reason for this urgent exhortation is made very clearly in the Handbook: 'The Eucharist is the centre and source of grace: therefore, it must be the very keystone of the legionary scheme. The most ardent activity will accomplish nothing of value if it forgets for a moment that its main object is to establish the reign of the Eucharist in all hearts. For thereby is fulfilled the purpose for which Jesus came into the world. That purpose was to communicate himself to souls so that he might make them one with him. The means of that communication is chiefly the holy Eucharist. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (In 6:51-52) Here we see how Frank Duff saw so clearly what the Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium of several Popes taught, namely, that the Eucharist is the source and the summit of the total work of evangelisation. The Lay Apostolate begins in the Eucharist and leads to the Eucharist and that is where priest and people are most closely bonded together. It is because of his love of the Eucharist that Frank Duff had such reverence and love for priests.

Let me quote a little more from the Handbook to give some idea of why the Eucharist was so central to the vision

of Frank Duff concerning the priest and the lay apostolate: 'The graces, which are thus asked for, flow one and all from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. By means of the Mass, the Sacrifice of the Cross is continued among men. The Mass is not a mere symbolic representation of the past, but places really and actually present in our midst that supreme action which our Lord consummated on Calvary, and which redeemed the world. The cross was not worth more than the Mass, because the two are but one and the selfsame Sacrifice, time and space being pushed aside by the hand of omnipotence. The priest and the victim are the same, the setting alone is different. The Mass contains everything that Christ offered to God, and all that he acquired for men; and the offerings of those who assist at Mass become one with the great offering of Christ. Therefore to the Mass must the legionary have recourse if a plenteous sharing in the gifts of redemption is desired for oneself and for others.'

As always Frank Duff sees the place of Mary in all the Christian mysteries. Just as the work of redemption begins with the consent of Mary solemnly asked and freely given so did its completion on Calvary involve her presence and her consent. And as the handbook puts it: 'She stood by the Cross of Jesus on Calvary, representing all mankind there, and at each new Mass the offering of the Saviour is accomplished subject to the same conditions. Mary stands at the altar no less than she stood by the Cross. She is there as ever cooperating with Jesus.' The Handbook appositely quotes John Paul 11 "'Her motherhood is particularly noted and experienced by the Christian people at the Sacred Banquet - the liturgical celebration of the mystery of the Redemption - at which Christ, his true body born of the Virgin Mary, becomes present. The piety of the Christian people has always very rightly sensed a profound link between devotion to the Blessed Virgin and worship of the Eucharist: this is a fact that can be seen in the liturgy of both the West and the East, in the traditions of the Religious Families, in the modern movements of spirituality, including those for youth, and in the pastoral practice of the Marian Shrines. Mary guides the faithful to the Eucharist.'" (RMat 44) In summary, the Church, priest and people like Mary guide the faithful to the Eucharist.

Sometimes people criticized Frank Duff on important issues because they did not fully understand how important the Eucharist was to him. Some felt his approach to ecumenism was wrong because he insisted conversion of our Protestant brothers and sisters was ultimately his primary concern. Obviously this conversion was sought in the context of mutual understanding, dialogue, and friendship. But he could not bear to think that our Protestant friends would be left without the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. So he would do everything in his power and exhort the Legion also to invite their Protestant friends into full communion with the Catholic Church. The supreme treasure of the Eucharist was a pivotal motive for ecumenism and evangelisation in his vision of things.

The Mystical Body of Christ Model

Anyone who knows anything about Frank Duff and the Legion of Mary will know how deeply rooted they are in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ In October 1913 at the age of 24 Frank joined the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

It turned out to be one of the most formative influences in his life. What particularly impressed him was the emphasis that the SVP put on the words from the Gospel of St. Mathew: "Whatever you do to the least of my brethren you do to Me." (25:40) Now Frank never claimed to have any private revelations or mystical experiences in his life but he said that one of the times that he may nearly have come to such an experience was when reading Garrigou-Lagrange's introduction to a book by Mura on the Mystical Body of Christ. Garrigou argued that we must approach our neighbour not as if he were Christ but because Christ was really present in him. Frank was overwhelmed by this insight and he made it the explicit basis of all his contacts with people. He always thought it providential that the first allocutio given at the first meeting of the Legion on September 7th 1921 was on the mystical Body of Christ.

Let me quote at length what this doctrine meant to Frank Duff in relationship to the theme of our Conference. He writes with the utmost conviction: "The priest is intended to be Christ in the world in His fullness: Christ the sacrificer, Christ the organiser of the Church, Christ the source of religious knowledge and the main teacher, Christ the converter of nations and the inspirer of men. But Christ's method of thus fulfilling Himself was to add on to Himself members and through them discharge His functions. Had He not done so, His religion would have died with Him on the Cross. But this conception has been lost sight of. Largely, the priest stands alone. Where he does call on the people to assist him, it is normally for purposes which do not belong to his proper priesthood. It is for material purposes of some kind (of course with an ultimate spiritual aim). Or at best it is for a social apostolate, in which case it is more a matter of the priest entering into a secular movement than the attaching of apostles to his own priestly function.

"Members" must have significance above that of employees or adherents or convenient adjuncts. "Members" must imply a connection and a kinship of function, and of course helpfulness and activity. A true member must be an extension of the priest, attuned to his outlook, throbbing in sympathy. The member must share in the priestly work to the fullest possible extent that is to the point where the lay function stops, but only there. If the laity is hedged off from the genuine participation in the ordinary pastoral office of the priest, the expression "members" is inappropriate.

A member is inseparable from its head except at the price of mutual loss. If the priest is without members, he is reduced to a negligible dimension, rendered isolated and helpless. As one man he cannot extend himself. He can deal with mankind and its problems only in a general or theoretical way which really amounts to nothing, i.e., by talking to audiences or writing."

Put briefly, the work of evangelisation is the task of the whole Christ, Head and members. It is an ecclesial event. It is the presence of the Risen Christ acting in and through his members. The Church is not simply an institution or a thing. It is Someone. It is the person of the Risen Christ living and acting through all the baptised. The whole Church, every member without exception is called to evangelise. Frank Duff was invited to the II Vatican Council as a lay auditor for the Session dealing with the Lay Apostolate. All the documents of the Council were a source of great joy to him especially the chapter on Mary in *Lumen Gentium* and the Decree on the Lay Apostolate. He saw the Council teaching on these themes as a confirmation of his lifelong convictions that he had written into the Handbook. The laity are assigned by

Christ Himself to the apostolate. The right and duty of apostleship have their origins in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist and indeed for many in the sacrament of Marriage. The sacraments of initiation are not only an initiation into the life of Christ but also into his mission. The sacramental model of the lay apostolate is found throughout the writings of Frank Duff especially in the Handbook. There is a deeply reflective section in the Handbook that draws together the vision of Frank Duff on the way the Legionary shares in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Jesus. Even though it is extremely important, I think it has been sufficiently explained by other speakers at this Conference.

I would like to mention in passing the role of the Legion in the secular world which is the normal ambience for the living of the lay vocation. Frank Duff maintained that the Legion proposes a way of life more than just the doing of a particular work. It gives a formation that is meant to influence every department of life and every hour of that life. The legionary who is only a legionary for the duration of the meeting and the work assigned to him is not living the spirit of the Legion. They must bring their Legion formation into their daily lives whether it be in the world of politics, finance, art, culture, trade unions, factory, business, teaching or nursing or whatever their particular way of life: The Legion's purpose is to help its members and all those in contact with them to live out their Christian vocation to the full. That vocation has its source in Baptism. By Baptism one is made another Christ or as St. Augustine puts it: 'We have not only become other Christs but Christ himself.'

The Marian Model

I would like at this point to give a personal testimony concerning the Legion. As a novice I read the *True Devotion to Mary* by St. Louis Marie de Montfort. I found it very moving and convincing. Unlike Frank Duff at his first readings of de Montfort, I had very little difficulty with its content or his style. I always felt that Mary Mediatrix of all graces was self evident. The role of Mary was to bring Jesus into the world. This was the plan of God. Was there any grace outside of Jesus? In giving us Jesus she gives us absolutely everything. When Mary was appointed the mother of all mankind I found it difficult to imagine what areas in our life could be excluded from her maternal influence. Her universal maternity of the human person was one of the great fruits merited by Christ on the Cross. She is the Mother of Divine Grace, of every grace that comes from the work of our redemption in Christ.

But I found it very difficult to practice the True Devotion as outlined by de Montfort. I found it emotionally exhausting and gradually I stopped trying and went back to simply praying to Mary as my Mother. Then when the annual retreat came along I had another go at reading de Montfort and trying to transpose it into practice. But my efforts did not last long. I began to think it required something exceptional that I just wasn't able for. Then I met the Legion and the writings of Frank Duff and the practice of the True Devotion suddenly became possible and normal. I met hundreds of Legionaries who lived it with great joy and simplicity. It provides another key to the vision of Frank Duff on the vocation

of the priest and the laity in the work of evangelisation. But here I wish to dwell on only one aspect of *True Devotion to Mary*.

The basic principle of the True Devotion is to go to Jesus through Mary just as Jesus comes to us through Mary. The aim of the Legion therefore is to bring Mary to the world as the infallible means of winning the world to Jesus. This presupposes a proper understanding of the God given role of Mary in the plan and execution of the work of redemption. Following on those principles Frank Duff passionately believed that real devotion to Mary obliges us to apostleship. An important way of understanding the nature of all apostolate is by seeing it as a sharing in Mary's maternal care of the mystical Body of Christ and indeed of all humankind. Perhaps, it would be helpful to quote from the Handbook on this theme: "Her whole life and destiny have been motherhood, first of Christ and then of men. For that she was prepared and brought into existence by the Holy Trinity after an eternal deliberation (as St. Augustine remarks). That motherhood of souls being her essential function and her very life, it follows that without participation in it there can be no real union with her. Therefore, let the position be stated once again: true devotion to Mary must comprise the service of souls. Mary without motherhood and the christian without apostleship, would be analogous ideas. Both the one and the other would be incomplete, unreal, unsubstantial, false to the Divine intention. It is difficult to see how there can be any authentic devotion to Mary without being deeply involved in her maternal care for the salvation of all souls. As St. John Bosco said: 'true devotion to Mary is loving her with your sleeves rolled up.' The doctrine and practice of the *True Devotion to Mary* is one of the great gifts the Legion has offered to me as a priest.

The Holy Spirit and Mary

Now I wish to speak briefly of the most fundamental of all models Frank Duff uses for explaining the nature of the apostolate: it is the union of the Holy Spirit and Mary that gives Jesus, the eternal Word made flesh to the world. We have already said that there is nothing in Mary that is not a reference to Christ. She is totally Christocentric and if our devotion to her were to terminate in her it would not be a true devotion. We go through and with Mary to Jesus. There is a similar movement in Mary to the Holy Spirit. She is totally open to the Holy Spirit, completely under his influence. He is the primary agent in her mothering of Jesus and His mystical Body. He is the primary agent in all evangelisation. And the position of the Holy Spirit in relation to Mary is the principal paradigm for the Legion of Mary. The Legionary makes his promise to the Holy Spirit. Everything in the Legion is subject to his influence and overshadowing. It is because the spirit of the Legion is the spirit of Mary that the Holy Spirit has the absolute primacy in the life of the legionary. And it is the combination of Mary and the Holy Spirit that makes the apostolic person most adapted to bringing Jesus into the lives of others. The priest as the ordained man of the *epiclesis*, the one with the special power and vocation to always and everywhere call on the Holy Spirit, who needs to be most intimately united to Mary. Together they enable him to be another Christ and to form Christ in the souls entrusted to their care.

Let me end where I began with the idea of the inseparability of the priest and the laity in the work of evangelisation. I quote one of his favourite stories that might leave us with some idea of his deep convictions. It is found in the Handbook: "Happening to be one day among a group of Cardinals, the Holy Father (St. Pius X) said to them:- 'What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?' 'Build Catholic schools,' said one. 'No.' 'Multiply churches', replied another. 'No again.' 'Increase the recruiting of the clergy' said a third. 'No, no,' replied the Pope. 'What is most necessary at the present time is to have in each parish a group of laymen at the same time virtuous, enlightened, determined, and really apostolic.' This holy Pope, at the end of his life, counted for the salvation of the world on the training, by the zeal of the clergy, of Catholics devoting themselves to the apostolate by word and action, but above all, by example. In the dioceses in which, before being Pope, he had exercised the ministry, he attached less importance to the census of parishioners than to the list of Catholics capable of radiating an apostolate. He considered that in any class whatever, chosen ones could be formed. And so he classified his priests according to the results which their zeal and their abilities had obtained on this point." (Chautard: The Soul of the Apostolate, 4, 1.f.)

By way of conclusion I want to quote Frank Duff concerning one priest in particular who befriended him and the Legion. It is just an example of Frank's great love and service of priests. "On that first night the topic of the Allocutio was the Mystical Body. Again a keynote! Unerringly the stress was laid. At its first breath the Legion was put in mind of its first principle: It was to be Mary tending the Body of her Son. If it ceased to be that, it was nothing.

Then the meetings succeeded each other - and the years. During the course of them, what does not the Legion owe to Father Toher! To write his story would be to write the history of the Legion. He was always there even in a literal sense, for he seldom took a holiday. And ever he was, as the old phrase puts it, guide, philosopher and friend. During those years it was, impossible to think of him as dead, and the Legion as without him. But now he is gone. In one way his loss is irreparable, for it is the vital loss of a parent. But we must believe that he is more with us than he was before, more interested, more powerful, more at the beck and call of the Legion than ever he was - and not harnessed to one place by degrees of latitude or longitude, but immediately available to the Legionaries of the whole world, to hear them and to help them, and particularly to preserve their unity and spirit."

If what Frank Duff says of Fr.Toher is true it is even truer of himself. My dear fellow priests, Frank Duff would love to be at your beck and call, he is even more interested in you now and more powerful. I would like to encourage you to give him a try and ask you to promote an interest in him especially among the laity who desire to engage in the lay apostolate. He will not let either you or them down.

5. MARY, STAR OF THE NEW EVANGELISATION



Fr. Brendan Leahy, Professor of Systematic Theology, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

1. Evangelisation and the Art of Living

The topic I have been asked to address is "Mary, Star of the New Evangelisation". Since this congress is primarily for priests and about priestly ministry I will treat the topic from this perspective. In what way is Mary, Star of the New Evangelisation for us priests? What can we learn from her regarding the New Evangelisation and the relationship of priests and laity? This short paper can only be a beginning of a response to such questions.

I would like to start firstly by referring to a talk given in 2000 by the then Cardinal Ratzinger.¹ He brought us to the heart of what evangelisation is about when he said:

How do you learn the art of living? What's the path toward happiness? To evangelise means to show this path -- to teach the art of living...

For many, the art of living remains an unknown. Many have technological expertise, financial savvy, artistic genius...and yet, the art of living remains an enigma. People ask: what gives meaning and direction to the various bits of my life - family and work, study and recreation, social commitments and my interior life - and other deeper questions, such as about finding a relationship with God, about relating to others, living a happy life and ultimately, how to reach heaven.

In an article in *The Economist* two years ago, Professor David Walsh of The Catholic University of America commented on the fact that from a philosophical-cultural perspective, a central theme runs from Kant through Hegel, Schelling, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and Lévinas: the meaning of existence cannot be expressed, but must in the

¹ See his address to catechists and teachers of religion during the Jubilee of catechists and teachers of Religion, Sunday, December 10th, 2000.

² "The Turn toward Existence as Existence in the Turn" in Charles R. Embry & Barry Cooper (eds.), *Philosophy, Literature and Politics: Essays Honoring Ellis Sandoz*, Columbia, Missouri, 2005, 3-27.

first place be lived.² And it's that life which people search for.

The then Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out that Christians who want to communicate the "art of living" discover that it can only be communicated "by those who have life - those who are the Gospel personified." And here we come to the need that is sensed today of a New Evangelisation. The classic means of evangelisation, such as Mass, the sacraments, preaching, even institutional commitment to the causes of justice and peace are always essential to evangelisation but they aren't enough.

Simply re-presenting the proclamation of Scripture and Tradition in what has been called an "ecclesial positivism" no longer fits the bill. Something more is needed. A new way is required. Let me quote Cardinal Ratzinger again:

A large part of today's humanity does not find the Gospel in the permanent evangelisation of the Church: That is to say, the convincing response to the question: How to live? This is why we are searching for...a new evangelisation, capable of being heard by that world which does not find access to "classic" evangelisation.

Pope John Paul was of the same view and affirmed, in a statement that became a summary-statement of the New Evangelisation, that we need an evangelisation that is "new in ardour, in methods and in modes of expression".³

Where are we to look for this new evangelisation? Pope Benedict knows that it is not a question of tactics or programmes, nor of immediate success or sudden large numbers. Both Popes Benedict and Pope John Paul II have looked instead to what has been called the Marian principle in the Church for the new life required for a new evangelisation. Addressing the newly created Cardinals in 2006, for instance, Pope Benedict referred to Pope John Paul II's emphasis on the Marian principle and then reminded the Cardinals that the Church's Marian principle in the Church is "even more fundamental" than the Petrine principle to which it is united.⁴

Behind the Pope's affirmation here is his understanding, one shared also by Pope John Paul II, of the bi-polarity in the Church of what are called the Petrine and Marian profiles.

On the one hand, there are objective columns of ecclesial life - the Word, sacraments and ministry. These are the sure foundation pillars of the Church, the "rock" - and it's in this sense they are called the "Petrine" principle (from Peter, rock) -- upon which the whole edifice is built. Ultimately, this "rock" is Christ himself present in the midst of the community, the Risen Crucified Christ who speaks and works in the Word, the sacraments and his ministers.

On the other hand, however, the People of God, the Church, that Jesus Christ gave life to through his death and resurrection, is fully realised only when there is an active response on our part to the gifts communicated through the sacraments, apostolic preaching and community-building ministry. And it is this aspect of life and active response to

³ Address to Bishops of CELAM, Port au Prince, Haiti, 9 March 1983.

⁴ See his homily at the Eucharistic Concelebration with the New Cardinals on March 26th, 2006.

the gift that can be linked to Mary, the first disciple of Jesus Christ. She is the model of the Christian and ecclesial life. All the People of God, through their "yes" echo in some way Mary's primordial "yes" uttered at the Annunciation and repeated at the Crucifixion. There is an active Marian principle operative in the life of the Church. And Frank Duff is a great witness to this.

Both principles are co-extensive. The Church wouldn't be fully Church without the inter-action of the Petrine and Marian principles. And this has implications for our priestly ministry too. While priests, through the gift of the sacrament of Holy Orders, give Christ sacramentally, they are also called and particularly today to communicate Christ existentially, that is with their lives, just as Mary did. Perhaps it is one of the main signs of the times for priests that we are being called today—to rediscover that the basis for our ministerial participation in Christ's priesthood is our baptismal "Marian" priesthood. For the effectiveness of ministerial priesthood, our attention needs to focus on the living out of the Marian priesthood into which we are baptised as Christians together with all our lay sisters and brothers.

At this point, I would like us to pause and offer a moment's reflection written by Chiara Lubich, "a great Catholic lay woman" in our Church, as Pope John Paul II called her. She began the Focolare Movement during the Second World War. In this meditation she expresses something of the need for each of us to re-live Mary in our lives as the basis of all our evangelisation. Let's listen then to Chiara's words:

Our Mother is so beautiful in her continuous recollection as shown us by the gospel: "But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (Lk 2:51). That full silence fascinates the soul who loves. How can I live like Mary in her mystical silence when our vocation at times is to speak in order to evangelise, always exposed in every kind of place, rich and poor, from cellars to streets, schools, everywhere?

Our mother also spoke. And she gave Jesus. There has never been a greater apostle in the world. No one ever spoke such words as she, who gave the Word.

Our mother is truly and deservedly called the Queen of the Apostles.

And she kept silent. She kept silent because the two could not both speak at once. The word must always rest against a silence, like a painting against a background.

She kept silent because she was a creature. For nothingness does not speak. But upon that nothingness Jesus spoke and said: himself.

God, Creator and All, spoke upon the nothingness of the creature.

How then can I live Mary, how can my life be perfumed by her beauty?

By silencing the creature in me, and upon this silence letting the Spirit of the Lord speak.

In this way I live Mary and I live Jesus. I live Jesus by living Mary.⁵

⁵ See Chiara Lubich, *Essential Writings: Spirituality, Dialogue and Culture* (London: New City, 2007), p. 138.

At a time when the Church is "launching out into the deep",⁶ it seems the Holy Spirit wants us to rediscover the Church's Marian profile as the basis for our re-launching out into the deep. There could be a number of ways we might reflect on this. For instance, we could examine the place of the new ecclesial communities and movements as an expression of this Marian profile. We could consider the Church's Marian identity in terms of engagement with today's culture, and of course we could reflect on the link between the laity and Mary. But in this paper, written especially for priests and bearing in mind that, as Pope John Paul put it, "we cannot evangelise if we do not first evangelise ourselves, if we are not personally an object of evangelisation,"⁷ I'll limit myself to a consideration of some of the features that I believe we as priests can learn from Mary, the first evangeliser and the first to be evangelised.

A Choice of God and Doing the Good God Wants

The context of the new evangelisation is one that requires of us a deep, personal experience of God. Karl Rahner's famous remark comes to mind: either Christians of the third millennium will be mystics – in the sense of having an experience of God – or there won't be Christians. We all know well that the culture no longer simply accepts priests just because they are priests. So the first point that we learn from Mary in this context is the need to put God in the first place in our lives and do the good God wants.

From the Annunciation to Pentecost Mary's life was one constant "yes" to God, always and in so many varied circumstances. She had no official status, no office, no powers, no ministerial authority other than the essential authority of a life immersed in God.

The "new ardour" for the New Evangelisation that we can learn from Mary is to see God who is love and not the priesthood as our ideal. God is the essential value. Of course, the calling to priesthood is excellent, a high calling, but we have to be careful not to confuse the gift of vocation and ministry with the Giver who is God. Mary teaches us that. We learn from her that it is important to be detached from everything, even the most sublime realities, even the best of programmes and aspirations. Imitation of Mary in this regard makes us free, simple, more authentic and acceptable to the people of God and be with our lay brothers and sisters in evangelisation.

Recently, I read of a priest from China telling how at the end of the 1960s he was studying in Rome. It was a time when many were leaving the priesthood and he too was seriously tempted to throw in the towel. To the point that he'd more or less decided he'd set up a Chinese restaurant in Rome! The Easter holidays were approaching and he was invited to a meeting for seminarians and priests. At that meeting a priest, Fr. Silvano Cola, who was giving the retreat,

⁶ See Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter on the beginning of the new millennium, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001).

⁷ To Pilgrims of the diocese of Turin, 19 February 1998 in *La Traccia* 2 (1998), pp. 174–75.

said: "to be a priest doesn't mean anything"... The seminarian was shocked. Maybe he'd come to the wrong place. After all, his suffering was precisely in feeling he wouldn't be able to become a priest, the only goal he was living for up to that time. But then the priest continued: "To be a priest is worth nothing if we don't choose God as our only Ideal, placing him in the first place in our life." The then young seminarian felt it was like a "blow to his forehead" (it seems this is a proverb they use in his area in China based on a method [a blow to the forehead accompanied by a shout!] that traditional Zen masters use to wake their disciples up and drive away useless thoughts and so open their mind to the pure spirit of things and reality). The priest recalls how he suddenly understood that up until then he had been attached to "becoming a priest" as if it were the only and exclusive ideal of his life instead of choosing God. "I had," he said, "invested myself totally in priesthood and not in God. The words of that priest saved my life and gave me strength to be faithful to my choice. It's true. It's to God alone that I owe my life. And God is Love. To base my life on God-Love is what matters. All the rest will pass. God remains for ever, only love is eternal. I returned to the seminary convinced that I was following God and not priesthood." Forty years later in China the priest still recalls that moment as crucial in his life.

Of course, Mary's life is synonymous with doing the will of God. That's what mattered to her. And here too we can learn. To do the good that God wants. There are so many good things we can do. Increasingly, however, we too, like many around us can find ourselves on a treadmill of a hyper activity. Ministry demands we be busy! Rightly so, but not to the point where our lives are so unbalanced that they provide a distorted vision of Christianity. When we think of Mary, as artists and poets have depicted her, we don't think of someone rushing around in a hectic enterprise. Mary teaches us that love has an order to it. Contemplating Mary, Star of the New Evangelisation, is perhaps a gentle invitation to us to live out the various aspects of life in a harmonious way, recognising that what matters is to do the will of God who loves us immensely. And so we can find time for prayer, exercise, looking after our health, attending to correspondence, engaging in continuing formation.

All of these aspects can be opportunities to express our love for God and neighbour. Focussing on doing the will of God provides a unifying thread to our day because we see things in terms of the will of God not as something we have to do or to which we have to resign ourselves, but as a divine adventure of being able to love God and moment by moment co-create and co-redeem the world the him, in the little and the big things. It's not the what we do but how we do it that matters.

Love of Neighbour and Mutual Love

A second element that Mary teaches us for the New Evangelisation is love. Mary's life was one extended act of love for her neighbour. Pope Benedict describes this beautifully in his encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est*

Mary is a woman who loves... We sense this in her quiet gestures, as recounted by the infancy narratives in the Gospel. We see

it in the delicacy with which she recognizes the need of the spouses at Cana and makes it known to Jesus. We see it in the humility with which she recedes into the background during Jesus' public life, knowing that the Son must establish a new family... When the disciples flee, Mary will remain beneath the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25-27); later, at the hour of Pentecost, it will be they who gather around her as they wait for the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14). (n.41)

The Legion's *Official Handbook* reaches a culmination in emphasising charity. What we learn from Mary is that love is not sentiment but action. In imitation of Jesus, Mary lived out an "art of loving" that teaches us how to live. Let's note some of the features of this art of loving. She takes *initiative* - she went to Elizabeth. She didn't just wait for Elizabeth to visit her! Her love is practical - she made herself one with others and their needs and joys such as we see at the Wedding Feast of Cana. Her love is *universal* - see the Magnificat where she sings of "all generations", she doesn't make distinctions between categories of peoples. At the foot of the Cross she becomes a mother to the Beloved Disciple, representative of all of humanity. She really sees *Jesus in others*. St. Ephrem describes this beautifully when he says that Mary and John see Christ in one another.⁸

In exercising pastoral ministry, we know that the sacraments work *ex opere operato* (the sacraments themselves work). But today we are called to be attentive to the *ex opere operantis* (the aspect of our response). Before our preaching, before our sacramental celebration and before parish administration, in the sense of beneath all we do, we are called to live out this art of loving that takes initiative, that is universal, practical, involving loving others as ourselves, that sees Jesus in others. This a constant conversion. But it's the kind of love that evangelises. As Paul VI so prophetically pointed out now almost forty years ago people today want to see witnesses.⁹ They want to see a love that goes out to everyone, the "good" and the "bad", to Catholics and non-Catholics, to people of other religions, to non-believers, to foreigners.

Essential to the New Evangelisation is a love that reminds us that our lives are not restricted to our parishes or sectors of our parishes or those that come to mass. In particular, it means solidarity with those who are lonely, discouraged, sick, elderly... ...Everyone we meet is a candidate for this charity.

Recently, just before he left to take up his post as Prefect of the Congregation for Clergy, Cardinal Hummes, in a homily given at an ordination in San Paolo said: "True pastoral ministry is born in a priest's heart, in his capacity to love each person and every poor person. A new pastoral ministry is born when a priest loves." Afterwards he met the spiritual director of the seminary there and said to him "as a spiritual director you should inculcate that a thousand times in the hearts of seminarians."

⁸ Cf. Mar Aprem, *H Virg* 25:9 (Jn 19:26-27) in Pierre Yousif, "Marie et le disciple bien-aimé", 302-303.

⁹ See his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975) (n.41).

A priest friend of mine who is working in a particularly socially deprived area where the practice rate is extremely low told me some time ago of something that happened to him in the parish. He went out one day on his bike to deliver a letter to someone. He knocked on the wrong door. In realising his mistake, however, he didn't rush off but took time to stay and chat for a while with the relatively young man who had answered the door. The man didn't know the priest from Adam! But they had a good conversation. My priest friend said he really made the effort to go that extra mile in charity and chat though he would have liked to just move on. Some weeks later, tragically the man died suddenly. The undertakers contacted my priest friend saying "are you the priest on the bicycle?!". They then explained that the family specifically asked if he would be there for the funeral as the man had been struck by the conversation with the priest and had, in turn, spoken of him warmly to his family.

Charity, love opens up new and constructive relationships. And this is also true with ministers of other churches and representatives of other religions. All of this is part of the New Evangelisation. And we learn from Mary to have a heart that is open and universal in its outreach.

We need to go a step further and perhaps this is another dimension that Mary teaches us as particularly relevant for today. And that is mutual love. In John's Gospel we read that on the eve of his death, Jesus gave the new commandment of mutual love. On the Cross, the following day, he entrusted Mary to John and John to Mary, thereby establishing the first cell of the Church marked by a mutuality of being for one another that was to characterise Christians throughout the centuries.

St. Peter, for instance, reminds us that before everything else, *ante omnia* (1 Pet 4:8) we are to keep mutual love alive among us. Before everything else... And Tertullian's reporting of what was said of the early Christians is well known: "look how they love one another and each is ready to die for the other."¹⁰

The first place where priests can put this mutual love into practice is among priests. Perhaps this needs to be understood more deeply. Vatican II recommended strongly to priests that they should spend time together, share together on the life of the Gospel that they are trying to live, meet up regularly, share meals together, share their material goods to live an effective poverty, pray together, plan their apostolate together.

Increasingly, priests are beginning to journey more together. I know of priests who practice "an hour of truth", a moment in which they help one another to remove faults and also a moment of highlighting their brothers' virtues for the comfort and encouragement of all.

Why is this mutual love so important for evangelisation? It generates unity among priests. And isn't that what Jesus prayed the night before he died saying: "May they all be one.... so that the world will believe?" Unity and evangelisation

¹⁰ Apology, 39.

are intrinsically, inseparably and dynamically linked. Unity brings happiness and peace. It renders more visible the very presence of Jesus living spiritually among the two or more united in his name (Mt 18:20). And with him, The Evangeliser, what more would we want? In a certain sense, it is the Johannine missionary mandate "*love one another*" that is coming to the fore today as the shape of how to fulfil the more classic Matthean missionary mandate to go teach all nations. Mary, so much linked with the Beloved Disciple, John, and so much a mother teaches us to live out mutual love, to build the family of priests.

All of this is a reminder of the importance of our diocesan priesthood as a presbyterate united around the bishop, of opening ourselves to the problems, joys and sufferings of the universal church, of understanding the Pope's role and of being attentive to the teachings both of the universal and local Church.

Building the Church as Communion – Jesus Crucified and Forsaken

In the lead up to the new millennium, Pope John Paul invited us to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church today (cf. Rev 2:7). And if there's one word that is often mentioned today to summarise the Vatican Council's vision of the Church, it's the word "communion." The Second Vatican Council indicated that the way forward for the Church is a rediscovery and promotion of an ecclesiology of communion. And that is explained in terms of taking the life of the Trinity as the model for all Church life. Pope John Paul II continued this theme and in the letter written to mark the beginning of the new millennium that I've mentioned above, he underlined how the Church will only go forward to the extent we promote a spirituality of communion, that we "live the Trinity".

But we all know that building communion is not easy! It's one thing to create structures of communion - and that is absolutely necessary - but it's quite another to animate our structures with a spirituality of communion at every level. How many setbacks, disappointments and frustrations priests experience in attempting to build up the parish community.

Here too Mary is the Star of the New Evangelisation. She is the Woman of the Trinity: daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, Spouse of the Spirit (Frank Duff describes this very well). She is the mother of unity and communion, as St. Augustine tells us. She points us to the means needed to generate the Church as communion: the Cross.

Throughout all the periods of the Church's history what Tertullian affirmed resonates as always relevant: the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. St. Augustine says something similar but perhaps more beautifully when, in interpreting John 21:16 concerning Jesus' prophesy of Peter's martyrdom and the mandate to tend the sheep, he comments as follows:

"Tend my sheep," this means suffer for my sheep.... A mother cannot give life to a child without suffering. Each birth requires suffering, is suffering, and becoming a Christian is a birth. Let us say this once again in the words of the Lord: The Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence (Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16), but the violence of God is suffering, it is the cross. We cannot give life to others without giving up our own lives.

Sufferings and setbacks are part of everyday life for each of us and for the Church as a whole. But who better than Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our mother to understand what we are going through? It's sufficient to recall her life. It could be read as one continuous experience of a "dark night" - from the negative external circumstances of Jesus' birth to the flight into Egypt, from the losing of the child Jesus in Jerusalem to her apparent rejection by Jesus during his public ministry, from the foot of the Cross to the continual birth pangs of the early Church described in the Book of Revelation.

There is, however, a particular aspect of Jesus on the Cross that Mary must have felt deeply, that moment when Jesus Crucified cries out a cry of abandonment: "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; Mt 27:46). In order to bring us into communion with God and with one another, Jesus experienced an absence of communion with the Father and with us.

It was by being obedient to the point of death and abandonment that he was priest and mediator and generated the Church becoming its "head". Mary too must have lived something of her own experience of abandonment. After all, she was losing her God, the God incarnate, her Son, to take on the motherhood of John and in that way contribute to the generation of the Church as Christ's "body."

In the fragmented, post-modern culture we live in, God is "missing but not missed." It's not easy to evangelise in an atmosphere where there seems to be no secure reference points to latch onto. At times it can seem that we work a lot but with little fruits to show for our labours. The cold winds of antagonism or indifference, confusion or rejection, cynicism or derision can knock us. Scandals and betrayals at all levels can discourage us. Exhaustion and weariness can wear us down.

But it is precisely here that we can imitate Mary and learn from Jesus who, at the ninth hour, experienced an intense darkness, infinitely beyond any sense of darkness that we might ever experience.

In our own way, we too can begin to see those who are sad, confused and disappointed as similar to him. After all, isn't every painful suffering, every division among brothers and sisters, among people of different ideologies and outlooks, among priests, among priests and bishops similar to him? Indeed, aren't the wounds of humanity the image of Jesus who made himself "sin" for us, as St. Paul says. (cf. Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21)

Each one of us personally experiences sufferings that are at least a little like his in our lives. Which of us has not felt in some way separated from God when darkness invades our soul? Who has not experienced doubts, perplexities, anxieties, a sense of betrayal and failure just as Jesus did when on the cross he doubted, was betrayed, was perplexed and asked "why?"

When we feel these sufferings, these pains, we have to remember that Jesus made them his own: they are almost his presence in our lives, and our participation in his suffering. We are invited to do as Jesus did, who did not remain traumatised, but added to his cry the words: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46), and abandoned himself again to the Father. This is important: to re-abandon ourselves to the Father and keep on loving. This is what Mary lives too as she stands by the cross and takes up John in a new maternity.

Also in the New Evangelisation we too can go beyond sufferings and overcome the trials we are going through due

to new circumstances by saying: "I love you in this trial, Jesus Crucified and forsaken, I love you, it reminds me of you, it is an expression of you, one of your many faces." And, then, in the next moment of life throw ourselves into loving our brother or sister and doing what God asks of us. In doing this we discover that suffering can be transformed, almost like in a divine alchemy, into new life. In fact the gifts of his Spirit flourish in us because of our love for Jesus Crucified and Forsaken.

So then, the night that so many feel around them today can become a passageway into the beginning of the resurrection. They begin to see a new culture being born, a culture of communion.

Once I had an experience that brought this home to me. I was in a parish where a scandal had happened. The parish was divided. I felt at times that no matter what I said or did to try and help the situation, I was wrong. It was an impossible position to be in. But one day, I remembered that Jesus Crucified and Forsaken was like a lightning conductor that took onto himself all the negative, all limits, all situations of impossibility. In him, the difficulties could be consumed within. What was important was to keep on loving. And there were fruits.

In terms of the New Evangelisation, they are called to re-live this mystery of Jesus Crucified and Forsaken in all the situations they meet as they strive to build up communion among individuals, among parishes, among different groups, everywhere. In Him they will find the motivation and the strength not to flee from the negative things that hit us but to bring right there, their personal and collective remedy.

In imitating and reliving Jesus Crucified and Forsaken in their lives, as priests they can discover here too their own royal priesthood as the foundation of their own ministerial role. By focussing on living with determination their own royal or baptismal priesthood as the basis of their ministerial service, they become aware of a new fruitfulness in own pastoral ministry. By living out their royal priesthood they are freed from every form of clericalism that casts a shadow over the Church. And, of course, it is Jesus Crucified and Forsaken who reminds us of the value of trials, sickness and even death itself. He guides us in their pastoral action in favour of the sick.

Conclusion

From John's Gospel they see that Jesus gave Mary particularly to us in the person of John (cf. Jn 19:26-27). They are to bring her home into their spiritual lives. They are to do so for their joy and comfort but also to have her before us as the model of the Church they serve. She is the Star of the Church's New Evangelisation. Just as Mary gave birth to the physical Christ, so too she teaches us how they are called to "generate" spiritually, as it were, Christ within and among people.

In the post-synodal exhortation on the laity, *Christifideles Laici*, they were reminded that the core of all evangelisation is witness and proclamation to each person they meet both by their words and their behaviour: God loves you, Christ

died for you.¹¹ It's true. In this talk I have tried to outline some of the elements that I believe emerge from reflecting on the Church's Marian profile that help us do that: life, the choice of God, love and the mystery of Jesus' cry on the cross.

Frank Duff, to whom so many are indebted for opening up the way to live out their baptismal call to holiness, teaches many elements of an evangelising art of living that is found in the Marian principle in the Church - think and live in Christ, pour yourself out into another soul, have the mind of Mary, be Mary.

¹¹ See *Christifideles Laici*, 34 and also *Evangelii: Nuntiandi* 11.

6. THE PRIEST SENT TO EVANGELISE



*His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican
at the Celebration of the Eucharist*

Just before he ascended into heaven, our beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gave his Apostles the mandate, the mission, to evangelise the whole world. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me", he said to them. "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you". And he gave them his divine guarantee. "And look, I am with you always; yes to the end of time" (Mt 28: 19-20).

The priest is sent to evangelise. He proclaims the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. He should carry out this ministry with sustained zeal and dedication. It will be necessary for him to work in union with Christ and with love for the Church, if his apostolate is to produce the desired fruit. These will now be the four points for our meditation.

1. The Priest proclaims Jesus Christ

At the centre of evangelisation is Jesus Christ in his mysteries by which he saved us. His incarnation and nativity, life in Nazareth, public life with his teaching and miracles, his institution of the Church, his paschal mystery of suffering, death and resurrection, his glorious ascension and his sending of the Holy Spirit on his first disciples - this is the Good News of salvation which the priest proclaims.

The priest does not preach himself. He does not project his own ideas or theories. He does not seek acclaim or attention for himself. No. He announces the Gospel of Christ without adding or subtracting. Whether the people find the message welcome or unwelcome, convenient or upsetting, the priest remains faithful to the Gospel. "We are preaching a crucified Christ", St Paul tells the Corinthians, "to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the gentiles foolishness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is both the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Cor 1: 23-24).

In particular, the priest is to make sure that his homily is solidly grounded on Holy Scripture, the liturgical texts and sound theology, so that it becomes good spiritual nourishment for the people. The homily should not dissolve into a mere sociological study, or theological hypotheses or, in more terminal cases, into political commentary. Jesus Christ should be clearly proclaimed. "There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom, and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed" (Paul VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 22).

2. Evangelisation with ardent Zeal

The priest preaches Christ with faith and conviction. He is not ashamed of the Gospel for "it is God's power for the salvation of everyone who has faith" (Rm 1:16). The priest is anxious to share with everyone "the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord" (Phi13:8). At ordination he is instructed by the Bishop that he is sent to celebrate the sacred mysteries, to preach the Word of God and to gather the people of God together. The entire mission which Christ entrusted to his Church is covered by the concept of evangelisation. As the 1974 World Synod of Bishops declared: 'We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church' (Declaration in *L'Osserv. Rom.*, 27 Oct 1974, p. 6).

As Pope John Paul II puts it, "The Church cannot fail to proclaim that Jesus came to reveal the face of God and to merit salvation for all mankind by his Cross and Resurrection" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 11). This is so because to us, as St Paul tells us, "this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8).

The priest must be on fire to carry out this ministry. With St Paul he can say: "Preaching the Gospel gives me nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion and I should be in trouble if I failed to do it" (I Cor 9:16). In the first reading of the Mass of this Wednesday of the Seventh Week of Easter, St Paul charges the elders of the Church of Ephesus: "Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers, to feed the Church of God which he bought with his own blood" (Acts 20:28) For the sake of the spread of the Gospel, St Paul willingly underwent hardships such as frequent travel, shipwrecks, betrayals, persecution, stoning, imprisonment, misunderstanding, and finally martyrdom (cf II Cor 11: 23-28).

The zealous priest is eaten up with love for the Gospel and the ministry for its promotion. He can inspire, because he first has fire.

3. In Union with Christ

The priest knows that the workings of grace in people's hearts is primarily God's doing. Whatever the priest contributes is by way of allowing himself to be God's instrument. Christ is the vine. We are the branches. Without him, we can achieve nothing (cf Jn 15:5). Inserted in him, we can bear fruit in plenty.

In the Gospel just read, Jesus prays for his priests. "Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name...

I have watched over them and not one is lost except the one who chose to be lost" Jn 17: 11, 12). All of us want to keep close to Jesus. None of us wants to behave like the one who chose to be lost.

The priest is not lacking in means of union with Christ: Holy Scripture read, meditated and prayed, daily mental prayer, Holy Mass celebrated with faith and devotion, Holy Eucharist adored outside Mass, Sacrament of Penance received regularly, and true Marian devotion since Our Blessed Mother leads us to her Son.

The priest who responds to God's grace in these various ways of union with Christ is well equipped to be a good evangelizer.

4. Loving the Church and being united with her

The priest to be a good evangelizer must love the Church and be in union with her. He was ordained by the Church and sent to evangelize by her. He works in unity and collaboration with his brother priests under the leadership of the Bishop.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. It is "the universal sacrament of salvation" (Lumen Gentium, 48). Salvation comes to us from Christ through the Church. "No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother" (St Cyprian: De Unit. 6: PL 4, 519). The Church, with her divine and human elements, is an object of faith. In the Credo we profess that we believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Obviously the divine elements in the Church can never fall short. But the human elements are not always what they should be. The priest does not lose faith in, and love for, the Church just because this or that particular minister or member of the Church has fallen short.

The priest's love of the Church and his faith are shown by his obedience to the Bishop, his love of his brother priests and harmony with them in the apostolate, his respect for liturgical norms and Church laws generally, and his readiness to do his part in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

Dear brothers in the priesthood, it is a great honour for us to be called, ordained and sent to evangelize. It is also a grave responsibility. Mary the Most Blessed Virgin, Mother of our Saviour, obtain for all of us the graces of total commitment, dynamism, perseverance, fidelity and joy in the apostolate of proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

7. THE SERVANT OF GOD, FRANK DUFF – AS I KNEW HIM



Síle Ní Chochláin, Vice President, Concilium Legionis Mariae

In so brief a talk it is possible only to pick out a couple of short snapshots of Frank Duff. Other legionaries and priests will have a better knowledge of the man himself, and have a different set of snapshots to offer.

The first time I met Frank Duff I was still at school and had not yet joined as an active member of the Legion of Mary. He was 76 years of age at the time. In appearance he didn't immediately stand out as being anyone special. However, when he came over to us I was struck by the interest he took in the person with whom he was conversing. To my father who was with me at that meeting, though they hadn't met for about 20 years previously, without any effort Frank Duff took up the threads and asked about a relative by marriage and other people who were mutual acquaintances.

Some years later I had an opportunity to see Frank Duff more often when attending a variety of meetings at the Concilium. The next impression I had of him was of being a man of deep prayer. However interested he was in a human being he was even more deeply interested in the Lord himself. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and especially during the celebration of the Eucharist everything else was excluded for the duration. An abiding memory I have is of him kneeling on the right hand side of the oratory in the Regina Coeli Hostel, completely absorbed.

Another image I have of him was arriving at Mount Sackville Convent for the annual Peregrinatio Pro Christo planning day, armed with a small briefcase from which he took out a foolscap sheet of paper for each of us – filled to capacity with headings pertaining to different parts of the world. The outcome of those planning days decided where teams of legionaries would go during their holidays, providing them with an opportunity to go to another country to give witness to and to offer the Faith. Frank Duff believed in setting ideas to paper and then including everyone in the planning process thereby allowing the Holy Spirit to have his say. He was a great believer too in the ripple effect: one person speaking to a second, the second speaking to a third and so on so that in time the ripple becomes a tide, and the tide becomes a torrent.

When the strengths and weaknesses of the Legion in a particular country was under consideration Frank Duff listened attentively to the different aspects, offered suggestions and rarely did a meeting end without agreement as to what the next steps would be.

This attention to detail was no less the case when it came to planning his annual cycling holidays in different parts of Ireland: choosing the part of the country to be visited, working out the number of miles between one town and the next to be journeyed each day; checking the bicycles were in full working order; ensuring that the accommodation was suitable for the group – everything was planned meticulously. He had a great love for his country and while on those cycling trips was able to switch off from the day-to-day concerns. In the evenings he regaled the group with stories of the early days of the Legion and the extraordinary people from all walks of life who crossed his path. Those occasions were opportunities to see his great sense of humour and to hear his hearty laughter when reminded of something funny which had occurred.

I recall sitting in the back row of St. Joseph's Hall, Rathmines Road, Dublin when the Concilium meeting was held there in the early 1970s. There must have been a seating capacity of 300 and there wasn't a seat to be had. In the course of one meeting an issue in one of the reports was being teased out, possibly to do with the issue of the right to life. Frank Duff contributed with a short but concise intervention on the most recent medical data on the issue. I remember being fascinated at how well read he was and wondered how, despite his heavy schedule, he managed to keep up to date with medical and scientific advances, areas in which he had a keen interest.

In the work relating to the introduction of his Cause we have had an opportunity to gather together the letters of his which are filed in the Concilium offices, about 33,000 of them. I was one of many who had the privilege of re-typing files of letters across a number of years in order that they would be computerised. I couldn't help but be struck by the picture he painted in the letters of what was going on in the Legion and in the Church at any given time. He freely shared this knowledge with those to whom he was writing both clergy and lay persons. He was frank and open with the views he expressed.

All of what he wrote had at its heart a concern for souls. He considered each soul to be priceless where God was concerned. All of us who knew him would attest to the fact that, as described in Chapter 40 of the Legion Handbook, his desire was that Christ would be brought to everyone. He exhorts in that chapter that everyone be approached "lest the gentle Jesus frown upon us".

In the very many talks he gave during his lifetime, right up to shortly before his death in 1980, a theme he returned to often was that of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He had studied everything written about her that he could get hold of. Not content with that he enriched us in those talks by sharing his knowledge with us, most especially the role she plays in bringing us to her Son. Indeed a couple of his talks on Our Blessed Lady, I believe, give an insight into Our Lady as yet not fully realised by the Church at large. Such was the intimacy, knowledge and love he had of her.

Cardinal Tomás O'Fiach described Frank Duff as the greatest Irishman of the century when speaking at his funeral. I agree that he deserves that accolade because of the graces that were conferred on him to mobilise lay people from all walks of life in all parts of the world, based on a realisation of the consequences when we receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

In those days after his death two aspects struck me: the numbers of ordinary citizens of Dublin and further afield who came to see his mortal remains in the Regina Coeli Hostel oratory, without any formal arrangement being notified; and when we emerged from Westland Row Church to witness the number of people who had gathered along the streets nearby to say their final farewell to this man who was not in the public eye. Many may never have met him personally but recognised him as a good and holy man and that he was.

I owe Frank Duff a great debt of gratitude. He enabled me as a lay person to have the possibility of coming closer to God in a particular way. Through the weekly meeting I was able to learn more about my Faith, about the doctrines of the Church, about the Pope's writings and about many other practical things. Through the organisation he helped to found he gave me as a lay person the possibility of not just thinking about but actually doing something concrete for the Church through the weekly work assignment. Had it not been for him founding the Legion of Mary, I wonder how committed a Catholic I would be, or at the very least, how much less enriched I would be. He held you – the priests – in very high regard, he respected what you stand for and he exhorted us lay people to support and to work with you in every way possible for the greater glory of God and in union with Our Blessed Lady.

8. THE SERVANT OF GOD, ALFIE LAMBE



Noel Lynch, former Legion Envoy to South America.

Alfie Lambe was a typical youth of his time in Ireland and always showed great devotion to Our Lady. He entered the novitiate of the Irish Christian Brothers at a very early age and showed all the signs of making an excellent religious but for one fact, his health. He was asked to leave because of recurring fainting fits. As Frank Duff said later. His departure from the Irish Christian Brothers was the last time he had a fit, the Brothers loss was the Legion's gain.

When he returned home to Tullamore he was devastated as his dream of being a religious had been shattered. One evening his bother Jack invited him to his Praesidium meeting and as Jack recalled many times, this first encounter with the Legion set him on fire. He was barely 18 years of age. In a very short time he was committed fully to the Legion and would do more than the 2 hours weekly work. His extra hours were dedicated to prayer and the setting up of the Legion in rural Ireland. His sister Kathleen often would confide to legionaries that he would set off on his bicycle early on a winters evening and return near midnight soaked to the skin and very little to show for his efforts. However the next night he would go off to another parish to do the same. Alfie saw in the Legion Our Lady's apostolate to Her children. The Legion was Mary in action.

He moved to Dublin and with the help of many good legionaries blossomed in his efforts to work the Legion system and set up new Praesidia. Not all Dublin legionaries recognized his potential but those who did knew that great things were ahead of this young legionary. When Alfie heard that Seamus Grace was going as envoy to South America he offered his services to assist him and to his sheer joy they were accepted. He was sent as a helper and assistant but in a very short time he was working on his own and travelling from one county to another in that vast continent. What congregation in the Church would send a 20 year old with just 2 years experience to take on an entire continent. This is exactly what he went out to do and did.

At this point it would be good to relate some experiences Alfie had with priests in Latin America.... His respect and reverence for priests was outstanding and he always greeted them with their full title, not often used in Spanish, Your Reverence. Most of the priests were just waiting to start this new association and welcomed him with open arms. Very

few opposed his work but even those who did were eventually won over by the absolute respect they saw he held for the priesthood. What we are witnessing here in the Priest Conference Alfie did on many occasions in Latin America as he was invited by the Hierarchy of many countries to address them at their annual gatherings to present the Legion to them.

There are many stories told over and over again of Alfie's apostolate to priests and his successful efforts to show them the Legion in action. One such story was when he was visiting a parish priest in one of the major cities explaining to him what the Legion would do for his priestly vocation, for the spiritual lives of his future legionaries and the evangelisation of his parish. In the middle of this conversation the parish priest got a sick call from the local hospital and asked Alfie to excuse him. Alfie asked the priest could he go to the hospital with him and the priest agreed. After a few brief moments with the patient the priest came out and said "There is nothing I could do, the man is a Jew" Alfie asked could he speak to the Jew and after 5 minutes came out and said, "You can go back now in Fr. the man wants baptism"

Alfie had an exceptional interest in seminarians and was inspired by St. Patrick's way of forming of future priests. He did not give the seminarians lectures on how to organise the Legion apostolate but brought them with him in teams to set up new Praesidia, visit older ones and do Legion work with local legionaries. The rector of a seminary offered Alfie 14 seminarians for a fortnight. Word had just come in that another diocese had opened to the Legion and Alfie took the 14 on the long train journey to that diocese. In the carriage they were travelling in he set up a miniature Legion altar and held a Legion meeting with the seminarians and assigned them to go in pairs to contact their fellow passengers on the trains. On that train journey 3 meetings and 3 sets of Legion work were done and on arrival in the dioceses the seminarians, with Alfie's help, set up many new Praesidia.

Bishops and priests would ask Alfie's advice on many spiritual matters and Alfie would always bring them back to this central theme, Mary's motherhood of souls and their privileged priestly participation in that motherhood. He convinced priests that often they would not wait for a team to set up the Legion in their parish but would start it themselves. Many missionary priests would do the same in the villages where no priest was resident. One such village was Chicoana. On learning the Legion from Alfie and with one Handbook a missionary set up a Praesidium. Two years later some legionaries went to see what had happened. The Praesidium with no contact or help from outside had survived and had 170 active members.

Alfie had a special gift to get people to do things they thought they were incapable of achieving. He worked with rich and poor, young and old. He always asked and expected great things from people. When starting a new Praesidium he would ask them where was the most difficult area in the parish. Who was the most difficult and impossible case. Then he would tell them now you will see how Mary will use you.

In another city he wanted to introduce the legionaries to the work for the street girls. The new legionaries, who were naturally afraid of embarking on such a venture replied, "We do not have that problem here" That night Alfie got into

a taxi and in a very broken foreign Spanish accent asked to be taken to a brothel. When he arrived he said, don't like that one take me to another. Next morning he had a list of addresses for the legionaries to start that work.

After 6 years of non stop apostolate and setting up the Legion in more that 10 of the Latin American countries signs of ill health began to manifest themselves. His luggage contained different painkillers and it was thought that he was suffering from stomach ulcers. He was operated on which revealed that all his major organs had cancer and within 10 days died a painful but saintly death.

The example of his short like inspired thousands of legionaries. When the news broke that he was seriously ill many legionaries offered their lives to Our Lady in exchange for his so that he could continue his work. God had other plans and on the feast of St. Agnes 21 Jan 1959 at 6 am he died. The Irish Christian Brothers in Buenos Aires offered their vault and that is where his remains rest. His grave is a centre of great pilgrimage and devotion.

What happened after he died could be compared to the Little Flower who promised she would shower graces from Heaven. Many of those who offered their lives went on to do long term and full time extension work. The summer period following his death over 200 legionaries went out and set up new Praesidia all over Argentina. The devotion to Alfie grows especially in S. A. as does the Legion. All age groups, but especially youth, have been inspired by him to do great things. At this present moment there are two Argentinean legionaries working on full time extension, one in Kazakhstan and the other in Bolivia.

One of the ideas of the Legion Handbook is that a legionary most always be on duty. Alfie taught by example. One day Alfie met a young man in a railway station. With a smile he asked him would he like to do something for Our Lady. The young man answered that he would but that he did not go frequently to Sunday Mass. Alfie replied; "I did not ask you about Mass but would you be willing to work for Our Lady". That same week he attended his first Legion meeting. Within a few weeks he was an officer of that Praesidium and soon after became officer of his Curia. Within a few years he went for the priesthood and to day is rector of the diocesan seminary.

Alfie had made plans to return to Dublin after 6 years in Latin America. His proposal to Frank Duff was that he was willing to go to extend the Legion in Russia and he had not only learned the Russian language but had worked out how he would enter the Soviet Union and also communicate in coded correspondence with the Concilium in Dublin.

Like many of the saints it is hard to penetrate the depth of his spiritual life and not too much can be said about it. However Alfie had this deep active devotion to Mary. He was never known to have anything but a smile and good humour in spite of the fact of travel and conditions that would have exhausted his frail body. He would renew his Legion Promise to the Holy Spirit very frequently and his bedside companions were the gospels, and St. Luis Marie True Devotion to Jesus through Mary. He made a point of keeping in contact with a huge number of people and aimed at writing at least 3 letters each day. These letters, like the spiritual advice he gave, were treasured by those who received them. A few days before his death a nurse commented on the fact that he said many rosaries. She said to him; "You are an extraordinary catholic". His reply was; " Oh no, I am only a very ordinary catholic".

His cause was introduced shortly after in death and he is identified by the Hierarchy as an Argentinean candidate for beatification.

Devotion to him grows and South American youth have taken him as their model. On his anniversary each year great crowds gather in a day long vigil at his tomb which includes Mass, many rosaries and also contact work in the area that surrounds the Recolecta cemetery. Each year a walking pilgrimage for youth takes place over many miles through the streets of Buenos Aires to his graveside.

Many favours have been received through his intercession, especially by the many who seek employment in countries where jobs are almost non existent.

For many legionaries, as well as non legionaries, Alfie is a saint. His life and example is being imitated by many who see in him a way to reaching spiritual and apostolic perfection.

9. WITNESSES TO THE FAITH: THE VENERABLE EDEL QUINN



Fr. John Hogan, Curate, Drogheda, Diocese of Meath.

Your Eminence(s), Brother President, brother priests, fellow legionaries, first of all I would like to thank Tommy McCabe and Concilium for inviting me to speak on the Venerable Edel Quinn. To be honest I was quite surprised when asked to speak on Edel Quinn because when I heard that the other two speakers were personally acquainted with the subjects of their talks, Frank Duff and Alfie Lambe, as one who never knew Edel personally, as is fairly obvious, I am sure there were more qualified people than I. But I appreciate the honour and hope that what I say will at least pay some homage to this remarkable woman.

My first introduction to Edel Quinn was through my aunt. She has been an Auxiliary legionary for years and it was through her that I heard of the Legion and of Edel Quinn. As a young boy she would tell me about Edel, the young, sick Irishwoman who left everything to spread the Legion in Africa and I was fascinated. When I became an Auxiliary myself I bought a copy of Cardinal Suenens' biography and found myself being quite charmed by this 'slip of a girl' and her heroic work. As the years passed I kept a passing acquaintance with her, dipping in and out of books, and my admiration for her grew particularly when sensitive events not recorded by the Cardinal, for obvious reasons, were revealed. I realized that we were dealing with a woman of extraordinary holiness and significance: a walking miracle, a real Catholic missionary and an authentic model for all of us and in particular the laity. I was delighted to know someone who knew her in life – Sr. Magdalen, one of the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Drogheda – indeed one of Mother Mary Martin's first companions. In conversing with Sr. Magdalen I have learned much more about Edel, but also tasted something of the experience of knowing her in the flesh.

With the limited amount of time available, even a brief biography of her would not be possible. Thankfully the Legion has a number of wonderful short biographies, and Cardinal Suenens' remains the standard – a real gem of a read. In these short talks we are considering three Legionaries as witnesses to the faith and indeed as models for the faithful. As priests we have a duty to present to those we minister to models of holiness to inspire them in their day to day living of the Catholic faith – this was part of Pope John Paul II's ministry and God granted the Church numerous miracles

throughout his pontificate to allow the beatification and canonization of many heroic men and women. Edel is still waiting: one has to wonder why since she has so much to say to the men and women of our day – particularly to the faithful in Ireland: God, however, knows the time.

Who was Edel Quinn? Or more correctly, who is she? – in terms of the Communion of Saints she is still alive and active. Those acquainted with her life story will recognize a woman of remarkable ability; one who was burdened by illness – TB; and a Christian of profound faith and a missionary of heroic standards. Edel is one of those rare souls who come into our midst and in a hidden way change us. Like a glacier she moves through the world and when she has gone you realize that something has happened, something has changed in your life for knowing her. This, I believe is as true now to those of us who know her best through prayer as for those who knew her in life. Edel was hidden: the words of St Paul come to mind: “hidden with Christ in God” and now she is being revealed. Many have compared her to St Thérèse of Lisieux, and certainly in their apparent ordinariness that is true. Sr. Magdalen told me in conversation that she seemed to be “very normal” and yet we now know that her spiritual life was profound. She tried to hide it, yet friends and acquaintances managed to catch a glimpse of the holiness, of the serenity, of the beauty of her soul. Perhaps if she had not gone to Africa and blazed a trail as an envoy, she might never have been revealed to be the saint she is. Thanks to his chains, the holiness of Matt Talbot was revealed, thanks to the Legion, Edel Quinn was revealed. Sr. Magdalen said that it was the Legion of Mary which made her a saint: she is the proof that the Legion system is one which can help sanctify. But she is also proof that holiness can be found in the ordinariness of life. Edel was on the way to holiness as she walked the streets of Dublin serving the poor and the lonely. She was on the way to holiness when she knelt in the Carmelite Church in Clarendon Street at Sunday Mass. As priests, we offer this woman to our people as one who shows us how to live as Christians, and in this we can discern a number of themes.

The first has to be her spiritual life. Edel wanted to be a nun – it was not to be. As she accepted God's will in this, she realised that she could live that life of prayer in the world. As Cardinal Suenens observed, as nuns lived their vocation of prayer in the cloister, Edel would live hers at the typewriter. Here we come into contact with the sanctification of ordinary life, of where we are. This is what Vatican II was speaking about. In recent years, in the cacophony of arguments over the Council this insight has been lost: as Catholics argue over their various political agendas the call to holiness has been forgotten. As priests we are called to lead people to holiness: this is what we are called to do: it is at the heart of the Legion's teaching and system, and is what we see first of all in Edel's life. She got it right. At the heart of her day was prayer, and at the heart of that was the Eucharist – Mass and Adoration. In recent years we have seen numerous documents coming from Rome calling the Church to be renewed in its devotion to the Eucharist – Edel in her spiritual life provides an example of how this devotion can be lived. As priests she can teach us a renewed reverence for the Eucharist, and remind us how to offer the Mass – with devotion and fidelity, and from our example we can inspire those we care for. She answers that question we often hear: how can I live a deeper prayer life while living and working in the world?

The second theme we can discern from her life is her vocation as a lay person. Edel is a worthy model for the lay apostolate. Since Vatican II there has been an emphasis on the vocation of the laity and this has led to some wonderful initiatives and also to a number of misunderstandings. In Edel we see a model of how lay men and women can take a more active role in the Church. We also see a model for the role of women. Many of the recent debates on the role of the laity have centered on their active participation in the liturgy and unfortunately we have seen in some places a clericalisation of the laity which has led, in fact, to an undermining of the vocation of the laity, taking them from their mission in the world into the "confines" of the sanctuary. The debate concerning women has been centered on whether to ordain them or not – unfortunately in that debate many have lost sight of what women can do in the Church: Edel can speak to the Church here. Anyone who knew her knew her not be a 'suppressed woman' but neither was she in revolt: her life was marked by fidelity. She loved the Church and wanted to spend her life serving it and she did, admirably. She embraced Frank Duff's teaching on the vocation of the laity and found within her life and where she was the opportunities to preach the Gospel and bring Christ to those who had not met him. Her genius was to understand her role in following the command of Christ to teach all nations. As a lay person she could go where the clergy could not; as a single person she could do what the married could not (there is in her the revelation of the vocation of the single life, an area which needs more attention in the Church). As priests we need to avoid the contentious issues and re-present the models of active lay service in the Church: Edel is one who can teach the laity how to reflect on their lives and to identify those areas into which they must bring Christ. Edel looked to Mary as her model, and saw within the vocation of the Mother, the vocation of the daughter and indeed the son – this is of course the genius of the Legion. Turning to the greatest lay Christian of them all, Mary, they discern their lay vocation by sharing in hers.

Edel can also speak to the young. While TB ravaged her body and she looked much older than she was, Edel died young – she was 37 when she died. Her life was that of a young person and as a young person she was chosen as Envoy – she was 29 when she left Ireland. Her life was marked by that youthful joyfulness and vivacity; eager and enthusiastic, she had much to offer the Church and the Church accepted. In his homily for the inauguration of his pontificate Pope Benedict reminded us that the Church is alive, and she is young. She does listen to the voices of the young and for those young people who are properly catechized there are endless possibilities. Each year the Legion holds a Youth Conference and invites the members of all the youth movements in Ireland, among them Youth 2000 and Pure in Heart, who are involved in successful programmes and evangelisation. In coming together these movements seek to form apostles for the new century and they look to Edel Quinn and other saints to inspire them. As a teacher, I know young people are interested in the saints, particularly in the heroic ones and the young ones: saints they might be able to identify with. (St Joseph of Cupertino is very popular in Ireland at the moment now we are in exam time!) In Edel we have one who is a young witness to the faith who might inspire others. The Legion, as the Church, still needs envoys and extension workers – our most recent envoy is a young man – Edel reminds young people that they have the energy and time and

vivacity the Church needs.

There are so many other themes: Edel's message to the sick and their vital role within the Church is profound in an age when euthanasia is posited as a solution to extreme illness, but time does not permit further reflection on this. But if I were to choose one last theme to present before you, it must be that which touches my heart the most: her joy. Edel Quinn, like St Francis of Assisi and St Philip Neri, was an Apostle of Joy. Living in difficult circumstances and situations, those who knew her remember first of all her joy. I sometimes think we live in a joyless age. Edel's joy, I believe to be supernatural in origin. Apart from her natural vivacity, she was imbued with that joy which only the Holy Spirit can give – a joy which emerged from her faith. If we are bringing Edel Quinn to the world, we must first reveal that joy and how it is centered in her faith: it is her joy which confirms her as a profound witness of the faith.

Last year, I suggested at the Legion's Youth Conference last year that Hollywood should make a movie about Edel – and what a movie! If a good actress could play her as she was, anyone who would see that movie, I am convinced, would fall in love with her and be touched by sheer delight. If they turn to her in prayer, they will immediately experience that joy and Edel, missionary she is, will bring them to the source of that joy: Jesus Christ and his Mother. So here we see that Edel has an important role to play in the New Evangelisation: her work is not over – it has only begun. I believe she will be as popular a saint as St Thérèse or St Pio as soon as the news gets out and we priests can find in her a powerful ally in our ministry: her attractive personality, her 'ordinariness', her heroism, her joy will draw people to faith. Perhaps that is why we are not seeing millions of miracles – God does not want her to be another wonderworker, but rather an inspiration – when people come to her it will not be to ease the pain in the back or find the glasses, or help Frankie in the Leaving Cert, but to come to a friend who will teach them about Christ and Mary and share her joy which will inspire and comfort them in the day to day difficulties of life, and in this she can help us in our ministry.

10. THE SPECIFIC ROLES OF THE PRIEST AND OF THE LAY FAITHFUL IN THE NEW EVANGELISATION



His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican

Evangelisation is the mandate given by our beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to his whole Church. In this Church there are different but complementary roles assigned to priests and to the lay faithful. It matters very much for the success of the mission of the Church that these roles be properly understood, lovingly accepted and dynamically carried out. May I therefore propose to this convention some reflections on the specific roles of the priest and of the lay faithful in the new evangelisation.

After a brief statement on what is meant by new evangelisation, the identity of the priest and then that of the lay faithful will be spelt out. Why is there sometimes a feeling that the lay faithful are not sufficiently integrated in Church structures? What areas of the apostolate are specific to the lay faithful? Collaboration between priests and laity seems obvious as a need and it will be no harm to stress some points. Qualities required on both sides for the promotion of this collaboration will be mentioned. We shall conclude with a citing of the Legion of Mary as a good promoter of such working together in the new evangelisation.

1. New Evangelisation

Jesus founded his Church as a "universal sacrament of salvation" (*Lumen Gentium*, 48). The Church is to bring the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to all peoples, cultures and times: "You will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth's remotest end" (Acts 1:8). "Evangelisation is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious Resurrection" (Paul VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14).

The content of evangelisation is always the same. "Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will

be for ever" (Heb 13:8). But we can speak of a new fervour, new methods and a new expression in the way in which this Gospel is announced and in which the Church witnesses to Christ. That is the sense in which the Servant of God, Pope John Paul II, spoke to Bishops of Latin America on March 9, 1983, on the new evangelisation and often later came back to that expression, as in his Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 18, in 1992.

In his Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, issued in 1990, 25 years after the Vatican II Decree on missionary activity, *Ad Gentes*, Pope John Paul II says that the missionary activity of the Church is only beginning. Today the Church has to face many challenges and "push forward to new frontiers, both in the initial mission *ad gentes* and in the new evangelisation of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed" (*Red Missio*, 30). This evangelistic effort should be marked by renewed determination, by the use of modern media to spread the Gospel and by new expressions in view of the changing situations worldwide and also of the meeting of the Gospel with new peoples, cultures and languages.

In this vital engagement in the new evangelisation, the differing but complementary roles of priests and the lay faithful are of crucial importance.

2. Identity and Role of the Priest

Who the priest is, and what role is assigned to him in the Church, are matters articulated by the Church in the instruction of candidates about to be ordained priests, as outlined in the Roman Pontifical. In brief, the priest is ordained to celebrate the sacred mysteries, to preach the Word of God and to gather the people of God together. By priestly ordination he is configured to Christ as Head and Shepherd of his people. By the power of the Holy Spirit he is set at the service of the Church for the salvation of the world. "The nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood cannot be defined except through this multiple and rich interconnection of relationships which arise from the Blessed Trinity and are prolonged in the communion of the Church, as a sign and instrument of Christ, of communion with God and of the unity of all humanity" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 12).

For the service of the Church in a diocese, priests form with their Bishop one priesthood in that place, an apostolic team, a sacramental brotherhood. With one another and around their Bishop they form a presbyterate. They serve the faith, hope and charity of the lay faithful. "They recognize and uphold, as brothers and friends, the dignity of the laity" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 17).

Priests are at the height of their ministry when they celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Here they act in the name and person of Christ. They alone consecrate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. They offer Christ to God the Father. The lay faithful, by the power of the common priesthood given by Baptism, offer with the priest and through him. "For the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood, though they differ in essence and not only in degree, are ordered to one another, for both partake, each in its own way, of the one priesthood of Christ" (*Lumen Gentium*, 10; cf also *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 36).

There are many areas of the apostolate in which the roles of the ministerial priest and those of the lay faithful work in a complementary way, as will be spelt out in the rest of this paper.

3. Identity and Role of the Lay Faithful

The lay faithful are those Christians who are incorporated into Christ and the Church by Baptism and who, unlike priests and religious, are called to live their share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ in the secular sphere. By the secular sphere is meant the earthly realities in which the lay faithful live and work. It is the world of the family, the place of work and recreation, science and technology, the arts and professions, politics and government, the mass media and recreation, national and international relations. "The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation" (*Apost. Actuositatem*, 7). It is this activity, this vocation that distinguishes them from the priests and the consecrated people.

The identity of the lay faithful is born in and nourished by the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. For the married, it is further specified and fortified by Matrimony.

It is important that we get it clearly that the proper area of the apostolate for the lay faithful is to proclaim the Gospel with an exemplary witness of life rooted in Christ and lived in the temporal realities just listed. "All secular human realities both personal and social, including various environments and historical situations, as well as structures and institutions – are the context in which the lay Christian lives and works. These realities are places where God's love is received; the commitment of the lay faithful must correspond to this vision and is to be considered an expression of evangelical charity" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 543). It is through the lay faithful that the Church is present in these arenas and that witness to Christ is given in them from within. As Pope John Paul II puts it: "For the lay faithful to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but in a specific way, a theological and ecclesiological reality as well" (*Christifideles Laici*, 15).

4. Are the Lay Faithful insufficiently integrated into Church structures?

With varying degrees of emphasis from place to place, we find in the Church the feeling among some lay faithful, and sometimes also clerics, that the lay faithful are not sufficiently integrated into Church structures. People sometimes hold this view because, as Pope Benedict XVI said to German Bishops on November 18, 2006, "their opinions are based on a restrictive fixation on collaboration in directive bodies, on important positions in Church-funded structures or on the exercise of specific liturgical roles" (*Address in L'Osservatore Rom.*, Weekly English ed., 6/12/06, p.16).

Of course these areas have their importance. Lay people can and should serve in Church councils, charity organization boards, parish and diocesan councils, etc; according to the nature of each body after due theological and ecclesiological discernment. Moreover, lay people can be called to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion when priests and

deacons are not sufficiently available, or to guide the Liturgy of the Word where there is absolutely no priest available to celebrate Holy Mass.

These, however, are not the areas specific to the lay apostolate. It is not a proper promotion of the lay faithful to get them to aspire to carry out roles normally reserved to the priests or deacons. The mission of the Church is not advanced by efforts to clericalize the laity or to laicize the clergy (cf *Christifideles Laici*, 23; *Eccl. de Mystero*, 4; *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 45). The truth of the faith is that the Church has a sacramental and hierarchical structure willed by Christ himself. "The Sacrament of Orders alone authorizes those who receive it to speak and act in persona Christi" (Pope Benedict XVI to German Bishops, in *L'Osserv. Rom.*, weekly Eng. ed. 29/11/06, p. 5).

"Precisely because the active witness of lay people is so important", continues Pope Benedict, "it is equally important not to confuse the special profiles of the respective roles". Let us therefore spell out more clearly the specific role of the lay faithful.

5. Apostolate Specific to the Lay Faithful

We must now ask ourselves what apostolate is specific to the lay faithful as different from clerics and people in the consecrated life. The Second Vatican Council is not ambiguous. It states this specific apostolate in Chapter III of its Decree on the Lay Apostolate. It lists the following fields: Church communities, the family, youth, the social milieu, and national and international affairs. A word on each. The activity of the lay faithful is "so necessary within Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness" (*Apost. Actuositatem*, 10). Think of various roles during Mass, the imparting of catechesis, participation in parish and diocesan activities, group apostolate as done in associations, movements, sodalities and confraternities.

In the family the apostolate of the laity is of unique importance for the Church and for civil society. It is the parents who bring children into the world, become their first communicators of the faith, and educate them. It is the lay people who are best placed to defend the family, "the domestic sanctuary of the Church" (*Apost. Actuositatem II*), Young people should receive from their families good understanding, advice and help to get integrated into the wider society. All lay people have a share in this important effort. The apostolate of the social milieu is the effort to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which a person lives. If the lay faithful do not discharge this apostolate, something vital would be missing in the general mission of the Church. The apostles of dock workers should be dock workers. The evangelizers of politicians should be fellow politicians. Academicians are to win their colleagues for Christ and the Gospel. Journalists should evangelize journalists. If a lay person fails to witness to Christ in this way, he or she would be an apostolic straggler.

National and international affairs are another arena specific to the lay apostolate. Catholics should cooperate with all men and women of good will to promote justice, development, more fraternal exchange between peoples and nations

and peace. It is not enough to lament of bad laws promoted by secularistic governments, of corruption which drains the funds that should have been used for the improvement of the lot of the poor, of the killing of unborn babies, of the humiliation of children and women, or of the injustices of runaway globalization and industrialization which understand only profit and do not consider the suffering of the poor. It is necessary to get into action and organize positive and effective action with like-minded people. This is dynamic lay apostolate.

We can therefore appreciate that the lay apostolate is necessary not because there are not enough priests, but because Baptism gives the lay person an assignment in the secular sphere. The lay apostolate is not a concession to the laity by the clergy nor primarily a help given to the clergy by the laity. It is a witness given to Christ. "Let the lay person take on his own distinctive role" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 43).

6. Collaboration between Priests and Laity

From the above considerations, it follows that collaboration between priests and lay faithful is not optional in the Church. The Second Vatican Council in Chapter IV of *Lumen Gentium* goes into considerable detail to show how this is to be done. The priest is to be recognized as pastor and the lay person accepted as a co-worker in the Lord's vineyard, with rights and reasonable freedom. Excellent results can be recorded when both sides are well motivated. Neither is a threat to the other. Each can and should affirm and build up the other.

May I mention some areas of collaboration. Priests and laity can together identify the challenges, tasks and opportunities for evangelisation in these areas. Are people getting weaker and vague in their Catholic faith especially in faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist? Is Sunday Mass attendance falling? Do less and less people come to confession or marry in Church? Is catechetics in questionable shape? Is the homily substantial from the points of view of Scripture, Liturgy and Theology, or does it tend to degenerate into theological acrobatics, sociological analysis or, worse still, political opinion? Have Eucharistic Benediction and the Community Rosary died out in the parish? What place have family prayers, prayers before meetings, the use of holy water and request for various blessings in the lives of the people? Are the young people showing a thirst for genuine religion even when they follow the sects or new religious movements? A working together at such pastoral analysis can be a powerful way to promote collaboration between priests and parishioners. "Ministries and charism, being diverse and complementary, are all necessary for the Church to grow, each in its own way" (*Christifideles Laici*, 27). "All of us, pastors and lay faithful, have the duty to promote and nourish stronger bonds and mutual esteem, cordiality and collaboration among the various forms of lay associations" (op. cit., 31).

7. Some Qualities needed on both sides

It follows necessarily that certain qualities are desirable on both sides if there is to be the needed collaboration

between priests and lay faithful. To avoid having to make a long list, perhaps they can all be summarized by saying that both sides should have as the one and only concern the promotion "Of the Kingdom of Christ". Everyone should be Christ-centred not self-centred. Priests and laity are not engaging in a power struggle. They are not trying to prove who dominates the other. Jesus has taught us that unless we be as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (cf Mt 18: 1-4). St Paul's one and only concern was that Christ be preached (cf Philip. 1: 15-19). St Paul discouraged those Corinthians who talked of factions for Paul or for Apollos, or for Cephas or for Christ (cf I Cor 1: 10-16).

Pope Benedict XVI points out how important it is that we all have the spirit of service: "The Liturgy calls us all to God's service, for God and for mankind. In this service we do not wish to stand out but to stand humbly before God and let his light shine through us" (Address to German Bishops, in *L'Osserv. Rom.*, weekly Eng. ed. 6/12/06, p. 16).

For all this to happen, we all need to be constant in Scripture meditation, prayer, humility and readiness to do God's will.

8. Legion of Mary as a Good Example

The Legion of Mary, founded four decades before the Second Vatican Council, seems to me to incorporate some of the beautiful insights, teachings and directives of this Council on collaboration between priests and laity. A word of this fine organization will bring our reflections to a conclusion.

The Legion of Mary handbook and practice spell out that the priest spiritual director is expected to supply doctrinal and spiritual orientation to the Praesidium or other council. He gives the members God's blessing. He is their link with the Bishop with whom ecclesial communion is appreciated as important.

The lay people guide and direct the Legion of Mary. They chair it and run it. They see, judge, act. They assess situations, assign work and discuss reports on work done. They make direct approach to people. They are not shy to share the faith with those who are ready and willing. They learn to overcome human respect and to evangelize. They listen to the allocation of the priest who gives them spiritual and theological nourishment which animates and nourishes their apostolate.

The Legion of Mary balances prayer and work. This is clear even in the order of events at a Praesidium meeting. Long before Vatican II, the Legion incorporated some of its best directives on the different but complementary roles of priests and lay faithful.

May the Most Blessed Virgin Mary obtain for all of us, clergy and laity, the grace to remain always grateful to God for the honour of being invited to do our part for the promotion of the Kingdom of Christ. May we respond to this grace with faith, commitment, generosity and openness to cooperation.

11. VOTE OF THANKS TO HIS EMINENCE FRANCIS CARDINAL ARINZE



His Grace, Archbishop Seán Brady (now Cardinal)

Your Eminence, Your Excellency, Mr. President, friends of the Legion, reverend fathers, it is a great honour for me to be asked to propose the vote of thanks to Cardinal Arinze.

The meeting has already expressed, in many ways, its thanks and appreciation of your clear and stimulating inspiring talk here this afternoon but I also thank you. During the recent Synod on the Eucharist, it was my privilege to represent Ireland. I also was in the English language discussion group, of which Cardinal Arinze was also a member, and I have profited by his many timely and wise interventions. It is a great joy to have him here this evening. I would like to congratulate the Legion of Mary on the wonderful initiative of organising this Conference – so inclusive in design, in bringing together lay faithful and clerics, religious and secular, national and international people. I think the attendance here today, in such numbers, indicates that there is a need for this. We need to put fresh heart into each other – lay faithful and clergy – in the task of the new evangelisation.

I thank you, Your Eminence, for the many topics you have raised, but especially that of empowering lay people to play their part in the secular world. The Church, for a long time, has invested much time and energy in education in Ireland, yet something is missing. It has come to my mind, while thinking about the coming of the Holy Spirit, that we should pray for the Holy Spirit to come to give us wisdom and courage. Perhaps we forget to ask for the power for lay people to stand forth, to speak up and to be apostles in the secular sphere. Please God by working at it, by reflecting on the issues that you have raised, and co-operating with people like the Legion of Mary, improvements can be made.

You were in charge of the Council for Inter-Faith Dialogue. You are well aware of the influx of people into Ireland now. The Church needs lay people to welcome them because the ordained ministers can't welcome them all. That's an important role to be played. There are so many people from your own country, Nigeria, and also from Poland and from Eastern Europe now in Ireland. There is a great ministry of welcome and making them feel at home. I am sure the Legion is playing, and will continue to play, its part there.

On an occasion like this, of course, there is a great temptation to blame the priest for presumed failures and, fair

enough, we will take our share of the blame. However, I would also like to pay tribute to the priests and the religious and to the Legion for many positive developments in the Church such as the great growth in adoration of the Eucharist which has taken place over the years, and for the great improvement in our liturgies. My predecessor, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, once said at a Synod that the laity was like a slumbering giant: if we could get it to wake up, it would do amazing things. However then he went on to say, of course, the Irish will sing in the pubs and they will sing at the football matches, but the one place they won't sing so well is in the Mass. I don't know what it is. Maybe it is a hangover from the Penal times, when we didn't want to sing or draw attention to where the Mass was being celebrated.

Your Eminence, today you have raised a number of important issues. You have set forth the teaching of the Church as Prefect of the Congregation for Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. I congratulate the Legion on attracting two Prefects from the Roman Curia here to this Conference. That's a fantastic coup. We welcome them, and I am glad to see so many people are here to listen to what they have to say to us. Let us note the example of Cardinal Arinze's zeal. Not alone did he celebrate Mass at midday and preach and give this long talk this afternoon and then respond to questions, but he is now about to leave to go to minister to the Nigerian population here in Dublin. That is a wonderful example in itself. So let's give him a round of applause for that.

Your Eminence, I wish you well. I thank you for your many visits to Ireland and your keen appreciation of the part that Irish missionaries played in the evangelisation of your own country. We are glad and, we hope, humble enough, to open our minds and to take on board what you had to say to us. We thank you for all of that, but especially for your own great example and we wish you well.



Thursday 24 May 2007

12. TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY IN THE LIFE OF A PRIEST



His Eminence Cardinal Ivan Dias, Prefect, Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, Vatican

During the audience which His Holiness Pope John Paul II gave to an International Retreat of Priests in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on October 9, 1984, he said: *"The world today needs priests, needs many priests, but above all needs holy priests"*. In this conference we shall consider how best we can become what the Pope desired: viz. holy priests; for, if we go down memory lane, this is exactly what we wanted to be on the day of our sacerdotal ordination, no matter how long ago it was. We shall take the cue from the masterly treatise *True Devotion to Mary* (TD), written by St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716) in the early 1700s.

Permit me to start with a personal testimony. All that I am about to say to you is not an academic exposition of de Montfort's teachings, but a witness to a spirituality which has strongly influenced and supported me all through the almost fifty years of my priestly life. As a recently ordained priest, only 22 years old, I was searching for some means to keep up the priestly ideals and to fan the spiritual fervour that had been inculcated in me during my seminary formation. I providentially came across the little book *True Devotion to Mary* in a bookstore in Bombay. It brought back so many pleasant memories of the years when I was a Junior member of the Legion of Mary, the lay association founded by Frank Duff with the monfortian spirituality. While meditating on this treatise, it dawned on me that de Montfort's thoughts, although meant for Christians in general, could be applied in a special way to priests.

St. Louis-Marie de Montfort reveals a beautiful secret, a shortcut to holiness. And the secret is MARY, the masterpiece of God's creation. De Montfort shows how one can best know, love and serve Our Lord, with Mary as our Mother, Model and Guide. *True Devotion to Mary* is an invaluable treasure, indeed. It has been commended by many popes ever since it was discovered in a coffer in 1842, where it lay hidden for almost 150 years. Pope John Paul II read it often as a young man, and he took his episcopal and papal motto *Totus tuus* from it. It has also been the inspiration of my own episcopal motto: *Servus*.

The treatise starts with a prophetic declaration: *"It was through the Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus came into the world, and it is also through her that he must reign in the world."* (TD 1). No priest, who is engaged in furthering the

advent of the Kingdom of Christ on earth, can be indifferent to this bold affirmation of a man of God.

St. Grignion de Montfort presents a vivid image of the Blessed Virgin Mary which is very relevant to her relationship with priests. He calls her the *forma Dei*, the *mould of God*. We all know what a mould is. It consists of two pieces of wood held together, with an image carved on the inside, with a hole through which molten wax or metal is poured. When the mould is opened, the article formed within bears the inner features of the mould. Now, Mary – says St. Louis-Marie – is the mould where Jesus, the Son of God and the Eternal High Priest, was formed. So, whoever is formed in this mould, at Mary's school, will bear the features of her Son (*cf TD 31-36*). It is therefore but natural that Mary should be the mould for every priest, who by definition is an *Alter Christus*. And what could be the best way to get into that mould? It is by cultivating Mary's sentiments and doing everything *through* her, *with* her, *in* her and *for* her (*TD 257-265*). As St. Ambrose recommends: "May the soul of Mary be in each one of us to glorify the Lord! May the spirit of Mary be in each one of us to rejoice in God!" (*TD 217*). So, the more our priesthood has a Marian flavour, the more pleasing it will be to the Most Holy Trinity, and consequently also be more fruitful, for Mary is the most cherished Daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son and the Spouse of God the Holy Spirit.

Triple thrust of a priestly vocation

Our priestly vocation has three main thrusts: a call to *sanctity*, a call to *service*, and a call to *spiritual combat*. These are the hallmarks of our priestly life. St. Louis-Marie teaches us how Mary can play an essential role in each of them.

Sanctity

Sanctity consists in loving God above everything with all one's heart, and soul and mind (*cf Mt 22:37*). To achieve this, de Montfort invites us to *consecrate ourselves totally to Jesus through Mary as slaves of love*.

One might be surprised that we speak of *slavery* in the 21st century. But, we speak here, not of a slavery which degrades and disgraces the human person, but of a slavery of love which ennobles and enhances human dignity (*TD 70*). It is a *servitude* by which we place ourselves totally and unreservedly at the service of the Divine Master, and surrender to Him all the faculties of our body and soul, our thoughts, words and actions, our good works past, present and future, the merits we have gained and the virtues we possess: in short, all that we have or will have in the order of nature, grace and glory (*TD 121*). We thus remain attached to God alone, and fully detached from all persons, places or things. Jesus becomes our "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (*Rev 22:13*). I am sure you have seen Demetrius, the slave, in the film *Quo Vadis* on the life of the early Christians in Rome. He is honoured to be at his master's service, he receives no recompense for his labours, he exposes his life to defend the master's household and is ready to die for his master. Such must be the noble sentiments of a priest towards Jesus, his Lord and Master, who deigns not to call him a *servant*, but His *friend*.

The Blessed Virgin Mary sets an example for us to follow. She gave herself fully to God as His *handmaid* (servant-slave) without keeping anything for herself. Her whole being was solely directed to God. De Montfort emphasises this with many metaphors. He says, Mary is the *pathway* to Jesus, leading souls quickly and securely to Him. She is a *magnet* which attracts the Holy Spirit. She is the *compass* which always points to Christ, her Son. She is the *echo of God*: if you say "Mary", she replies "God": as when Elisabeth praised her and called her blessed because she had believed God's message, Mary responded saying: "My soul glorifies the Lord... Holy be His Name". (TD 225).

In this way the Blessed Virgin Mary teaches us priests to beware of putting ourselves on a pedestal and of taking for ourselves the glory due solely to God. Our successes, and the titles conferred on us and the honours we receive make us especially vulnerable in this respect. So much so that, at times, we can forget that we are mere servants, and unworthy servants at that (*Lk 17:7-10*), even though, in His goodness Jesus has deigned to call us His friends (*Jn 15:15*), and has anointed us and empowered us to act in His name, *in persona Christi Capitis*, for things that pertain to God (*cf Hb 5:1*).

A priest must therefore constantly remind himself that his sacerdotal vocation is a free gift of God, given not because of his personal merits, talents or achievements, nor for his personal aggrandisement, but for his sanctification, and in order to build up the People of God. All through his priestly life, Jesus' words must, so to speak, haunt him: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have sent you to bear fruit that will last" (*Jn 15:16*). Take Mary's example: even though she is the Mother of God and the Queen of heaven and earth, she always considers herself to be the humble maid of Nazareth.

Service

The second thrust of our priestly vocation is *humble and loving service*. In de Montfort's school of spirituality, a priest who consecrates himself as a slave of love can never consider as his personal property anything that he possesses - his position and talents, his monies and friendships, his material goods, the persons entrusted to his pastoral care - but only as given to him to be administered unto as a *steward*. This echoes the mind of St. Paul: "This is how one should regard us: as *servants of Christ* and *stewards of the mysteries of God*" (*1 Cor 4:1*). Stewardship is the form of discipleship where the good of others takes precedence over one's own personal interests or preferences.

Even at Mary's school, *servitude to Jesus* means *service before self*. In fact, as soon as the Archangel Gabriel left her after the Annunciation, Mary did not sit back complacently, revelling in her newly invested dignity of Mother of God, but she went with haste to help her cousin Elizabeth who was with child in her advanced age. So also, at the marriage at Cana in Galilee, while others were enjoying the festive meal, Mary saw the empty wine jars and she 'provoked' Jesus' first miracle. For Mary, therefore, to be a handmaid of the Lord meant to go out and meet the needs of others, and she continues to do this even today from her throne in heaven. She teaches us not to be weighed down with our titles and

achievements, or to be puffed up with what we think of ourselves or with what others say about us, but rather to put our time and talents joyfully at the service of God and neighbour.

Priestly stewardship is a 24-hour service to be exercised in different ways: by dispensing God's Mysteries to His Holy People in the Sacraments, by caring for the poor and the marginalised wherever Jesus said they would be found: the hungry, thirsty, naked, in prison, strangers; by shepherding the parish flock, the associations and ecclesial communities, etc. Our priestly service would also necessarily include those who have left the Church, or who are indifferent to God or victims of broken marriages, etc. In short: we must be Good Shepherds and Good Samaritans to all those entrusted to our pastoral care. We cannot, and should not, be satisfied with giving God the minimum of our service, because the God who has called and sent us to work in His vineyard because of no merits of our own, deserves the best of our time and talents.

We have Jesus' own words and example with regard to servitude. He is known as the Servant of Yahweh, and "though He was in the form of God, He did not reckon it as a treasure to be jealously grasped on to, but He emptied Himself and became man, taking the form of a slave..." (cf *Phil 2:6-11*). When the apostles were discussing among themselves as to who among them was the greatest, Jesus tells them that the greatest among them has to be their servant, "just like the Son of Man who came, not to be served, but to serve and to give His life for the brethren" (*Mt 20:28*).

There are some very meaningful images of humble and loving servitude in the life of Christ, which could be a source of inspiration to us priests:

- ***Good Shepherd***: Like Jesus, a priest must give his life for his sheep, and have concern for the lost sheep and for those who are outside the fold. He should know his own and they must recognise his voice. He must not be like mercenaries who do not have the good of the sheep at heart, but only their own personal gains, and therefore limit their hours of service to the minimum and demand a salary which has been well calculated in the minutest detail.

- ***Good Samaritan***: A priest should step out to help others, guided by their needs, and not by his personal, social or political sympathy or antipathy.

- ***Jesus on a donkey's back***: Jesus puts on no triumphant attire, but rides into Jerusalem on a donkey's back (*Mt 21:1-11*). A priest should consider himself like that donkey, and be proud to carry Jesus high in his life, so that others can follow Jesus towards the heavenly Jerusalem. The praises strewn around him and the hosannas shouted towards him are not meant for the priest, but for the Lord Jesus, whom he is carrying high on His way to Jerusalem.

- ***Jesus washes the feet of His apostles***: A priest will always remember the Master's words at the Last Supper: "You call Me Lord and Master, and you do well, for so am I. If then I, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet" (*Jn 13:12-14*).

In this vision of service, Jesus' many *Servant parables* come alive and become very meaningful and demanding for us priests, for we see what the Lord expects of us, His servant-friends:

- As the faithful and wise servant, we must give those entrusted to our care their portion of food at the proper time, remembering that the Master will require more from him to whom He has given more (*Mt 24:45-51; Lk 12:42-46*).
- Like the servant returning after a hard day's work, we must acknowledge that we are unworthy servants, and have only done our duty (*Lk 17:7-10*).
- The servant who was forgiven his debt, but was unforgiving to his fellow servant (*Mt 18:23-35*) reminds us that we are agents of God's mercy, and must give freely to others what we ourselves have received in abundance from God.
- Like the watchful servants (*Mk 13:33-37; Lk 12:35-40*) we must wait patiently for the Master's coming at the end of our lives, and in the meanwhile use the talents He has given us to produce as much spiritual fruit as possible.
- The workers called at different hours to work in the Lord's vineyard (*Mt 20:1-16*) will remind us that it is never too late to start. We must not compare and contrast God's way of dealing with us or with others, nor be jealous because He is good.
- The Master will be severe with those servants who abuse their power, lord it over or ill-treat their fellow servants (*Mt 24:45-51*).

Servants of Jesus Christ are co-workers in the Lord's vineyard, working not only *for* Him, but also *with* Him. A servant-slave always has his eyes fixed on his Master in order to do his will (*Ps 123:2*).

Spiritual Combat

It is no secret that on our Ordination day, while our relatives and friends congratulated us and wished us well, there was someone lying in the lurch enviously disturbed and maliciously determined to ruin our priesthood by dampening our initial fervour, or degrading it to a superficial mediocrity, or planning to bring it to a state of disillusionment, and even failure. Knowing how fragile His ministers are and how they would be the devil's special targets, Jesus prayed for his newly ordained priests at the Last Supper: "Father, I pray that you keep them from the Evil One" (*Jn 17:15*).

Since the day of our Ordination, especially when we have sat in the confessional, we have been aware of the fierce battle raging in and around us with the Evil One, a battle which began in the Garden of Eden at the beginning of human history. Already then, God willed that Mary should enter into the picture and remain there till the end of time. Besides the Gospels, she features both in the first and last books of the Holy Bible. In *Genesis*, while God severely rebuked Satan for having led our first parents, Adam and Eve, to commit the original sin, He planned to send his Son as our Redeemer, born of the Virgin Mary, and He mentioned Mary's uncompromising stance against the devil: "I will put enmity between you and the Woman, between your seed and her seed. She will crush your head, and you will lie in wait at her heel" (*Gn 3:15*). In the *Apocalypse*, Mary is portrayed as the Woman, clothed with the sun, who is fiercely, but unsuccessfully, assaulted by Satan (*Rev 12:1-6*).

The over 2000-year-old history of the Church shows that the battle between the forces of good and evil has raged

with various intensity in the Church at large and in individuals. The saints, in particular, have felt the impact more fully, thus confirming what St. Paul wrote to Timothy, that: "those who want to live piously in the Lord will suffer persecution" (2 *Tm* 3:12) and, in our case, persecution from the devil. Take, for example, St. Patrick, who overcame so many difficulties and bore many sufferings in order to plant the Gospel in this country, and you are his heirs. And Jean-Marie Vianney, the saintly Curé of Ars, who led hundreds of thousands of persons to God through his ministry at the confessional and in the pulpit, but was tormented in different ways by Satan, especially when he wanted to rest for just a few hours at night. It is no wonder then that many a priest prefers to live a mediocre life in order not to be harassed by Lucifer and his wicked demons.

De Montfort felt this battle very keenly and had much to suffer from the wiles of the Evil One. All throughout his life he did not win the favour of his own bishop and was opposed by his fellow priests. He predicted that his treatise, *True Devotion to Mary*, would be torn to bits with diabolical teeth or left discarded in the silence of a coffer (*TD* 114), and so it was for some 150 years. Why? Because the spirituality of loving servitude of Jesus through Mary which he advocated was diametrically opposed to the schemes which Satan uses to lure people into his trap with baits of *prosperity, popularity and power*. The devil used these to tempt Jesus at the end of His forty-day fast in the desert: "change stones into bread" (reflecting the comfort-without-toil mindset or the prosperity gospel in vogue among some Christian sects); "throw yourself down from the pinnacle, and people will believe in you" (advocating a cheap popularity provoked by spurious healings and avoiding the hard way of the Cross); "I will give you the kingdoms of the world if you will bow down and adore me" (inculcating a greed for power and position at any cost, which forgets Christian identity and values and is even ready to 'sell one's soul'). The antidote to these temptations of the devil is precisely what de Montfort proposes in the consecration of loving servitude of Jesus through Mary, i.e. a poverty of spirit, which involves a total detachment from all that distracts from God and, above all, humility which touches, so to speak, the tendermost chords of the heart of God.

The war between God and Satan, I repeat, is on since the beginning of human history and is getting fiercer every day, today more than ever before. Already in 1823, the German mystic Blessed Anne Katherine Emmerich – who was privileged to see the life of Christ in a series of visions – described Jesus' descent to the underworld after His death on the Cross. She saw Jesus consoling those who were in limbo and purgatory, and then descending into hell. Here He met first with Judas, who had betrayed Him, and received the humiliated submission of all the devils. She then saw Lucifer, the chief of demons, who had been hurled into hell in chains, and she utters this frightening prophecy: "Fifty or sixty years before the year 2000, God will unleash Satan for a little while" (*The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, ch.59). These are precisely these years we have been living in. Satan is going around today unfettered, and is doing untold harm both in the Church and outside it. His victories are clamorous, but superficial, because he is fighting a losing battle.

For since 1830, a few years after the revelations of Blessed Anne Katherine Emmerich, the Blessed Virgin Mary has

entered openly into the fray of the battle between good and evil when she appeared to St. Catherine Labouré, a novice of the Sisters of Charity at Rue de Bac in Paris, and made her coin a medal with her effigy on it: Mary stands on the world globe, with her feet crushing the head of the Serpent (the devil) - as was announced in Genesis - and with her arms wide open giving out bright rays of light, to mean the many graces that she is showering all over the world. Around her image is the inscription: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.* [N.B. This was in 1830, twenty-four years before the solemn proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX in 1854. Four years later the Blessed Virgin herself would give her name as the Immaculate Conception during her apparition to Bernadette at Lourdes (1858).] Thanks to the many graces received through this medal, it has been commonly known as The Miraculous Medal.

This medal has a special place in the *Legion of Mary*. It features prominently in the standard (*vexillum*) of the Legion. Around it every day the Legionaries all over the world recite the *Catena Legionis*, viz. Our Lady's *Magnificat* with this antiphon: "*Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?*" It is the battle cry of the Legionaries, with Mary at their head, against Satan and his wiles. And they are not alone.

It is encouraging to see how all over the world there are Marian shrines (some of which are awaiting the authoritative decision of the Church), which are frequented by millions of devotees, both Christian and of other faiths: from Knock here in Ireland to Kibeho in Rwanda; from Walsingham and Aylesford in England to Lavang in Vietnam; from Akita in Japan to Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina; from La Salette, Paris (Rue de Bac) and Lourdes in France to Vellankanni in India; from Saragozza and Garabandal in Spain to Guadalupe in Mexico; from Fatima in Portugal to Naju in Korea; from Cuapa in Nicaragua to Altötting in Germany; from San Nicholas in Argentina and Czestechowa in Poland to Aparecida in Brazil; from Amsterdam in Holland to Zeitoun in Egypt; from Beauraing and Banneux in Belgium to Betania in Venezuela; and - in Italy - from Pompei, Siracusa and Civitavecchia to St. Mary Major, Sant'Andrea delle Fratte and Tre Fontane in Rome. Mary is indeed gathering together her Legion (and you are a part of it), and is setting up a worldwide network for a frontal and final attack on Lucifer and his demons. De Montfort, in fact, prophetically foresaw "a great squadron of brave and valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, men and women, who will combat the world, the devil and corrupted nature, in those more-than-ever perilous times which are about to come" (*TD 114*). They will indeed hasten the day when Mary's words at Fatima will come true: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph".

Satan, we know, fears three unbeatable enemies: the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Michael the Archangel. The devil knows that he cannot fight against the Holy Spirit, who is God, while he is a mere creature, reduced to a miserable state because of his rebellion against God. He has a terrible inferiority complex before St. Michael the Archangel, who is an angel like himself, but whom God has made prince of the heavenly hosts. But Lucifer's greatest humiliation is to be crushed by the Blessed Virgin Mary, a purely human being belonging to a category lower than that of the angels; and she crushes him, not only because she is the Mother of God, but with her humility, which is the

hammer with which she strikes Lucifer's chronic pride and will defeat him. (TD 52).

Let us therefore beware of Satan's tentacles around us and pray often with the words which Jesus Himself taught us in the *Our Father*: "Deliver us from the Evil One".

Conclusion

We are living in very challenging times. Our sublime call to the Sacred Priesthood demands that we be men of God and men for others. This would demand that we be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, persons deeply engaged in the quest for sanctity, fully involved in the service of our brethren, and leaders in the spiritual combat against the forces of evil around us.

In *True Devotion to Mary* we have a secret that can help us priests to carry out the thrusts of our sacerdotal vocation efficiently and in a manner pleasing to the eyes of God. The secret is MARY, through whom St. Louis-Marie advocates that we consecrate ourselves as loving slaves of Jesus. Thanks be to God, there are hundreds of thousands of persons all over the world who are making this consecration and are finding therein deep fulfilment in their Christian call to holiness.

Mary is indeed the Mother of Hope, as we pray in the *Salve Regina*. No matter how badly bruised or psychologically shaken our priesthood may have been, Mary can rekindle the initial flame of the "gift of God" which was given to us by the imposition of the bishop's hands (2 *Tm* 1;6), and make us happy and holy priests. How consoling will it not be when at the sunset of our lives, having lived our calling at Mary's school of loving servitude of Jesus, we shall receive the Master's welcome: "Well done, good and faithful *servant*, receive the reward that has been prepared for you, enter into the joy of the Lord" (*Mt* 25:21).

I began this meditation by quoting Pope John Paul II's appeal for holy priests at the International Priests' Retreat in Rome in 1984. I end by making my own the Pontiff's concluding prayer on that same occasion: "May the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ the Eternal High Priest, accompany and sustain you. May she teach you, as a Mother to her beloved children, to say always *Fiat* to the will of Christ, her Son, who has chosen you to be His ministers. May she inspire you to often sing the *Magnificat* for the marvels which God is working in your priestly lives and through your pastoral ministry. May she lead you to imitate her *Stabat* at the foot of the Cross, when difficulties, misunderstandings and sufferings arise on your way to perfect holiness. In this way, with Mary and like her, you will taste the joy of the resurrection of Christ and witness to the whole world that *Jesus is Lord!*"

13. VOTE OF THANKS TO HIS EMINENCE IVAN CARDINAL DIAS



*Fr. Bede McGregor O.P. Concilium Spiritual Director and
Postulator for the Cause of The Servant of God Frank Duff.*

We have been speaking a good bit about Newman. And I think of the motto that is often associated with him, *Cor ad Cor loquitur*, heart speaks to heart. And I think that really was the key to Cardinal Dias's talk. He was speaking from the heart and to the hearts of us priests about what was deepest in himself and should be deepest in us. That I felt is the whole ambience of this conference giving us the secret of Mary.

It was lovely to hear you speak about the miraculous medal, which we associate principally with the Vincentians and St. Vincent and that whole wonderful family within the Church. Likewise, the Legion of Mary is very much associated with it. It was wonderful to be reminded that this medal portrays for us the whole theology of the spiritual combat and the hope it gives us.

I feel a particular delight in having Cardinal Ivan Dias with us. When the officers of the Concilium were discussing and planning this conference, it emerged naturally that one of the contributions that the Legion should be promoting would be the true devotion to Mary. But who would be able to gift us priests with the place of Mary in our lives? Cardinal Dias was suggested. Fortunately I happened to have worked with Cardinal Ivan in Bombay as a missionary for ten happy years. On one occasion we were on the same little group, on a visitation of the seminaries in India. I remember we were on the train together from Bombay to Pune on a visitation to the pontifical university there. The little group in Bombay had begun to read and live the doctrine of the true devotion to Mary. And then of course he explained to me about his one-word episcopal motto, "*servus*" and solid Marian spirituality which came to him while reading the *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* by Saint Louis-Marie Grignon of Montfort. He desires, first and foremost, to be a "loving servant and father to all".

I really felt an extraordinary communication with Cardinal Ivan during those days. So when it came to choosing a speaker that might present the true devotion to Mary to priests you came into our minds. Our intuition that you wouldn't say no to Mary turned out to be right and we are very happy that you are with us today. Cardinal Ivan you

represent really so much of the Church in India.

I want to thank you personally and on behalf of all here present for giving us once more a hearing of the gift of the true devotion to Mary.

14. HOW THE LEGION CAN HELP ME IN MY PARISH



Fr. Paul Churchill, Associate Judicial Vicar, Marriage Tribunal, Archdiocese of Dublin

1. Can I start by saying that a lot depends here on the spirit that a priest and local legionaries build up between themselves. And may I say that a good positive atmosphere will go a long way. Before we get down to deal with the possible works legionaries can do around the parish I think more important is the attitude, the spirit, the sense of camaraderie, the friendship and the sense they all have of working for the one cause, that of Christ, Mary's Son.

Frank Duff himself always carried in his heart a positive disposition of friendship to all people and he in his way really lived out those words of Our Lord, "Whatever house you enter, let your first words be: Peace to this house!" If people find in us a spirit of genuine friendship and goodwill towards them, even if they are odd as two left feet or if they be negative souls who moan and gripe about things, we can already begin to open doors to their hearts. Once we keep in mind that this other person—no matter how deformed or disfigured—is a child of God whom the heavenly Father loves surely we must greet them with love and peace. It was this spirit that helped those first legionaries to visit the cancer wards of the South Union Hospital and confront the huge problem of prostitution in our local city in the 1920s. And I would say that priests who work with the Legion should encourage a homely, friendly environment in the ranks of the Legion so that the legionaries and priest can work with the best dispositions of heart at whatever work they are doing and really be an Easter people, full of christian joy and positive outlook. A negative cantankerous spirit that would discourage people has to be battled against.

On the other hand can I say this to Legionaries. The Legion often is the place where the priest can feel and be at home. Very often the environment a priest works in can be hostile, lonely, unsupportive. I have found it a joy to come to a meeting in which you meet people of your own faith, who are on your side, who support and indeed love you. And looking at the title I was given to treat with *How the Legion can help me in my parish* I would say that we would do great injustice to reality if we did not see first the personal support the priest can get from legionaries who are on his side, or better still, who are with him fully in the cause of Jesus Christ. Certainly I have to say that one of my great experiences as a priest has been to attend Praesidia and Curia and other meetings at which I encounter people who are so committed

to their Church and faith and whose faith feeds my own. This can be great for encouraging to priests. Bring good will and friendship to every priest!

So to sum up the first part of what I have to say: let the Praesidium and Curia be first of all communities which befriend priests and vice versa and then with both priests and legionaries creating an atmosphere of support and encouragement for each other in the cause of Jesus and Mary, and indeed with Jesus and Mary, the Legion can become a shot in the arm for both priest, legionary and Church. Let us not forget that the early Church was a close-knit believing community in which all the members gave great mutual support to one another. That spirit of the early Christians by which they prayed together, shared fellowship, were united in heart and soul, gave them great heart in the face of the tasks ahead.

2. Presuming then that we are working in that atmosphere of encouragement and friendship and bringing it to others, how can the Legion help the priest in the work of the parish? And here we come up against a potential and indeed real difficulty, namely of priests not listening enough to committed legionaries and legionaries not properly listening to their priests. Sincere and honest sharing is imperative. When I read about the early days of the Legion here in Dublin, how young dedicated Catholics, working under Frank Duff's inspiration and assisted by equally committed curates of the Dublin Diocese were together able to identify and confront real challenges, surely it is an example to us. Frank Duff saw that one value legionaries have for priests is that they by their lay status and work can be in better touch with hard realities of life and can make contact at levels that priests can't. And today I still see how certain lay faithful can strike a tone with the man and woman of the street that actually touches them.

In the light of the huge changes in Ireland, just as dioceses and religious orders are doing, the Legion here in Ireland will need to re-appraise both the kind of works it can usefully undertake in the future and the mentality of its members in dealing with new realities. For this to be effective I believe it will require priests and legionaries working together and really listening to each other and supporting each other in the best possible atmosphere. It may require that we take on board those words of Jesus: new wine, new wine-skins. It is important that legionaries, if they are to offer their services to the priest, listen to the priest and his needs. But because the laity have a real contact with aspects of life that may be lost to a priest a priest does well to listen too to what legionaries have to say.

3. And now let us look at the possible works that legionaries can help the priest with. Chapter 37 of the Handbook deals with many suggestions as to works that legionaries can do. Some of these, such as hospital visitation, street contact, working with the most wretched and dejected of the population, are not per se parish focused even if in some cases they might be of value at parish level. But the very first subheading in Chapter 37 is Apostolate in the Parish. This fact alone shows that Frank Duff saw that the parish is a crucial place for the Legion to work in.

The first suggested work in the parish is visitation of the homes. Now there is no doubt but that today with fewer

priests in Ireland and the almost impossibility of us doing systematic visitation (certainly here in Dublin) to have helpers who would visit the homes of the parish would be a great benefit. I recently heard of one parish here in Dublin where a Praesidium carried out an effective visitation of the parish. Here let me say that it is very important that if the Praesidium visits the parish for the parish priest that it keep strictly to the terms of reference given it by the parish priest. Legionaries should be very professional in this and keep to what is asked. It might happen that if the legionaries do a good professional job they might attract others to the work. Some priests might say, "Well the legionaries in my parish are certainly not the ones I'd send out on visitation of the homes." But I ask might that be a prejudice? Yes, there may be some who for a lot of genuine reasons would not be suited. On the other hand among them may be one or two who on closer inspection may be as good as any priest. I wonder if it is not time for all on all sides to look at this as an area for future exploration?

The next suggestion in the Handbook for parish apostolate is as follows: Conducting para-liturgical services on Sundays and holiday of obligation in places where there is no priest available to celebrate Mass. Now when this Handbook was written no one envisaged that Ireland could become so short of priests that this work would become a realistic one for legionaries in Ireland. But how relevant it may yet be! The advantage to priests of using legionaries in this work is the spiritual formation legionaries get and their level of commitment to Christ and his Mother. True, there may be a need for legionaries to do some training in such matters. I also appreciate that not every legionary would be suited to such work or have an inclination to lead a worshipping assembly. And accepting that the best place for laity to work for Christ is at the coal-pit face of the secular world still the legion can play a very a valued role in the face of the difficulties caused by the current shortage of vocations.

The next idea is: conducting religious instruction classes. Religion has been part of our Catholic schools since the 1830s. But we may be on the verge of a new need in Ireland to instruct outside of school. In some countries of Western Europe it is no longer the schools that prepare the children for the sacraments and in our life-time this may become a reality here too. So should legionaries already be training in the RCIA, in programmes for the reception of Holy Communion, Confirmation and so forth? And the legionaries, with their love and care for the faith are in a good place to undertake such works.

Another idea in Chapter 37, subheading 1, is that legionaries recite the Rosary at wakes and funerals. The days have come in Ireland when a suitable legionary may be the one to go to the graveside and recite the prayers of commendation in the cemetery; perhaps to even conduct a funeral liturgy if we get to the stage of few priests and hardly any religious. I have no doubt but that the Church will get stronger again in Ireland. However we are facing an interim period in which the laity will have to attend to many functions. Already here in Dublin special training programmes are being held for such ministry as it is a need here. Among these may have been legionaries but certainly it is an area where priest and legion might put some thought to.

Also in our diocese we have what are called baptismal teams, a team of lay people who assist the priest in helping

prepare candidates or their parents for baptism. In some parishes certain members of the laity are now helping the priest in respect of marriages. There is no doubt but that well-formed members of the Legion of Mary could bring to such works their lively faith and the benefit of their prayer and by membership of Praesidia, working with the parish priest and supported in their faith group, they would find a very supportive environment in which to do such work.

Subheading 7 of Chapter 37 speaks of work with the young. Friendly faith-filled legionaries can do much to encourage children and young people. Not every legionary would be suited to this work but it may be that among those in a Praesidium there is someone who could give great help with children's masses and liturgies. Again I point out that the faith level of legionaries is likely to be high and it is a lively faith in a soul that helps beget faith in others. Real faith is infectious.

I turn now to Chapter 37 subheading 12 for another work: the dissemination of Catholic literature. Now that is a work the Legion of Mary has done traditionally in Ireland and I recall in my teens, as a member of an intermediate Praesidium, visiting doors and delivering Catholic papers. Is this work still of any value? Years ago I remember going to Mass in Trent, Northern Italy, while on holidays with my sister. I was very impressed by the celebrant. The Gospel was that of the Parable of the Sower. The priest asked this question: "What kind of word will you bring home today to your home after Mass: the papers, glossy magazines?" Think of the programmes you watch on television and radio. But does God's word get a look in?

We all agree that there is a pressing need to try and disseminate the Word of God and to get people to open their ears and hearts to another voice, the voice of God, a voice that speaks of peace and that gives life. We are challenged to find methods to help people attune to this Word of God. In other words that traditional work of the Legion of Mary to try and disseminate the Word of God to homes is not a bad idea, in fact it is an excellent one; but it needs to be freshened up.

One recent development in Ireland has been the arrival through digital television of EWTN into many homes and it has done me good to hear how many people are now tuning into this. By the way EWTN does not stand for "elderly woman talking nonsense" as some wag put it! To some it may seem a somewhat conservative Catholicism but from what I have seen of it, it is a solid channel that certainly won't put anyone seriously astray in their faith.

Thinking of modern means of communication requires us all to be more inventive in how we can spread the good news. If in the past the parish book-shop, often manned by legionaries, sold Catholic papers and magazines, why not now promote good films or documentaries by way of DVDs etc. which promote good human and catholic values? All of us should be on the lookout for methods in modern media culture of promoting the Gospel while acknowledging that in the end it is the witness through a loving personal contact that matters most. I note that NASA has a special section on its web-site for young people. Does the Vatican or any other diocese or Catholic organisation?

Subheading 18 speaks of each place having its own needs. And so the Legion handbook opens the doors to any initiative at local level that will help promote the faith. The priest and his legion group need to be attentive to the signs

of the times and both think and pray for spirit-inspired ways of promoting the faith. Let us not forget that it was out of real needs perceived by Frank Duff and others that the Legion took off. Let's not get fossilised in the ruts of an older way of doing things but re-awaken to that forming spirit that brought the Legion of Mary into existence.

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.

15. MARY, CAUSE OF OUR JOY



Fr. Gerard Deighan, Lecturer in Scripture, Milltown and Mater Dei Institutes.

The Litany of Loreto does not invoke Mary as our joy, or the source of our joy, but as the cause of our joy. There is theological precision in that. Our joy and source of joy is Jesus Christ. That is how he was announced to the Shepherds: *evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum* – 'I proclaim to you a great joy' (Lk 2:10). He is our joy because in him we find our ultimate joy, the joy of salvation. In her Magnificat Mary says: *Exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo* (Lk 1:47) – 'My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour'. Might I point out that in Hebrew 'my Saviour' is *yishu*, so close to *yeshu*, my Jesus.¹ To know that God has loved us so much as to take on our poor nature; that he forgives our sins, and fills our souls with his grace; that death is conquered, and a place prepared for us in heaven – this, and only this, can drive all sadness from the human soul and fill us with true joy.

Mary was the first to experience that joy. Pope Benedict likes to point out that Christianity began with the word 'rejoice'. That was the Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary at the Annunciation: in Greek, *chaire*.² We know that Mary did rejoice – she says so in the words of the Magnificat already quoted. In fact, if joy comes from salvation, from closeness to God and the experience of grace, then no mere human being has ever rejoiced more than Mary. 'Rejoice, full of grace,³ the Lord is with you.' (Lk 1:28) No one was ever full of grace like Mary, since only she was immaculately conceived;

¹ Cf. Hab 3:18 in the Vulgate: *exsultabo in Deo Iesu meo*.

² Cf. Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Fourth Sunday of Advent, 18 December 2005; Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco 1987) 75-76. The usual English translation of *chaire* is 'hail!', since the Greek word was commonly used as a greeting; but the literal meaning 'rejoice' is in no way obscured. One might compare the Irish greeting *Dia dhuit*, generally translated 'hello', but which literally means, and is still sensed to mean: 'God be with you.'

³ One might note that the Greek is *chaire kecharitomene*, and that the words for 'rejoice' and 'grace' are cognate. We shall return to this point later on.

and no one was ever closer to God than she who bore the Son of God in her womb. How rightly the Church puts in her mouth the words of Isaiah: *Gaudens gaudebo in Domino et exultabit anima mea in Deo meo quia induit me vestimentis salutis...quasi sponsam ornata[m] monilibus suis* – 'Rejoicing I shall rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation...like a bride adorned with her jewels!' (Is 61:10) Mary is, as the hymn⁴ puts it, *Mater plena sanctae laetitiae*, 'Mother full of holy gladness'. She is the *Virgo gaudens*, the Virgin who rejoices. But how is she the cause of our joy?

Philosophy has examined the complex notion of causality, and distinguished various types of causes. For example, what causes a statue? Is it the marble from which it is made, or the hammer and chisel which are used to sculpt it, or the hands of the sculptor? Is it the idea of the finished work of art which, right from the start, the sculptor holds in his mind, or is it the patron who commissioned the work? Let us adopt a very simple definition of a cause: that without which the effect cannot come about. In his plan of salvation God wished to be conceived and born in the same way as we are; and so he needed a human Mother. Mary was the *sine Qua non* of his coming. So the most basic answer to our question is that Mary caused our joy by being the means by which Jesus, our joy, could come into the world. To some extent she is in fact the material cause, in so far as she provides the Son of God with his very flesh. But she is most clearly the efficient cause. Just as the chisel in the hand of the sculptor, so is Mary in the hand of God, to bring about his purpose. The image, though instructive, is, of course, deficient. A lifeless instrument does not question the artist and can neither agree nor refuse to do his will. Mary is a living, and willing, instrument in God's hands; in fact, it is her very will which accomplishes God's work. The Angel's greeting to her, in Latin, is *ave*, a word which contains in reverse order the letters of the name *Eva*, Eve.⁵ Mary is summoned to reverse the refusal of our first parents to be the joyful servants of God; and by doing so, by her *fiat*, she allows the Saviour to be born. This is the primary sense in which she is the cause of our joy.

But how is Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, the joy 'for all the people' (Lk 2:10), to become *our* joy? How is each one of us to find his personal joy in the Saviour who is born for all? Here again Mary exercises her causality. It is a key insight of De Montfort's True Devotion that just as the Son of God entered the world through Mary's mediation, so it is through her that he comes into the life of every soul. By bringing us close to her Son, she brings us close to joy, and causes our joy. Here we see that the title Cause of our Joy implies the title *Mediatrix*. The Greek words for 'joy' and 'grace' are almost the same: *chara* and *charis*. As Mary mediates all grace, she causes every joy.

How does Mary bring us close to her Son? Precisely through her own joy in him, and its attractive force. We are drawn to Mary by her beauty, which is not just that of physical proportion and perfection, but that of spiritual radiance, a

⁴ *Salve Mater misericordiae*.

⁵ *Mutans Hevae nomen*, as the hymn *Ave maris Stella* puts it.

radiance of joy. We see how joyful she is – it is almost the first thing she tells us about herself: 'My spirit has rejoiced' – and we wish to find out the secret of her joy. Well, she has already given it to us, because, before she spoke of her joy in the Magnificat, she spoke of the secret of her joy: 'My soul magnifies the Lord'. For Mary the Lord is great, and she is little; but the Great One has had regard for her humility. The Saviour comes to bring joy, but salvation and its joy will only ever be accepted by the humble. As Mary teaches us this lesson, she prepares our hearts to become like her own; by the power of her example, she brings about our joy.

The cause of *our* joy, we say, not *my* joy. Mary is not only Virgin, but Mother. She leads us to rejoice not as isolated individuals, but as members of her family. So often people are sad because they have no true friends, no support from others who love them. Mary brings us together in the joyful family of the Church. The image of Mary which presides at every Legion Meeting is that of the Miraculous Medal. Mary's hands are extended to right and left, and we are to think of them as distributing God's graces to the world. But we may also think of those hands as reaching out to us, and inviting us to form a circle around her. With one hand I take the hand of Mary, but with the other hand I take the hand of my brother or sister, and the chain continues around until it returns to Mary's other hand. So linked together, and with Mary at our centre, we receive from her hands the grace of her Son, the grace of being the joyful family of God.

Mary attracts us to her joyful self, and leads us to Jesus the source of her joy. She binds us together in the joy of God's family. We can bask in that joy for a while, but then we must realise that we are being called to share it. As Mary is a beacon of joy for us, so we must be beacons of joy for the world. In this connection we might note that the original, Latin, text of our invocation is not *causa nostris gaudii*, but *causa nostrae laetitiae*. *Laetitia* and *gaudium* may both be translated 'joy', but *laetitia* is properly joy expressed, 'joyfulness', 'gladness'.⁶ The joy which Mary would cause in us is a deep joy, to be sure, but also a visible, palpable joy. Why so? Our joy being visible is of no benefit to ourselves. We are *laeti*, joyous, for the benefit of others. Mary inspires in us an apostolic joy. The face which is lit up with such joy reaches out to others with every glance.

There is a philosophical maxim which states that goodness is diffusive of itself, that is, goodness always wants to spread itself, to communicate itself to others. The very same can be said of that particular form of goodness which we call joy. No scene from the Bible better illustrates this than the Visitation. Mary, having conceived the joy of the world, cannot stay at home; she must go in all haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth. And so palpable is Mary's joy, expressed in her greeting to Elizabeth – the greeting we may presume was none other than *chaire*, 'rejoice' – that even the child in Elizabeth's womb could sense it, and leapt for joy. Deep within her own womb Mary bore the Son of God; but in her

⁶ Cf. *Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae* 2,27,3: *laetitia dicitur exsultatio quaedam animi gaudio efferventior: 'laetitia' denotat an exultationem spiritus, magis effervescentem quam 'gaudium'*.

voice, and on her face, she radiated the joy he brought her.

What a challenge for us who would bring Christ to the world! And yet what an appealing challenge! The Lord is asking us to be joyful in his service; to learn that his message is not an oppressive one, but a liberating one. Gospel, we know, is *evangelium*, 'good news', but so often it is presented as rather dull, if not actually bad, news. It is futile trying to convince others that our message is in fact good unless we have experienced it as such ourselves, unless we have actually found personal joy in it. If we have, our very joy will be all the proof we need. *Sis, Iesu, nostrum gaudium*, writes St Bernard in a hymn⁷: 'Jesus, may you be our joy!'

The world is longing for such joy – true joy. In his Apostolic Exhortation on Christian Joy,⁸ written in the Holy Year of 1975, Pope Paul VI wrote words as relevant today as they were then: 'Technological society has succeeded in multiplying the opportunities for pleasure, but it has great difficulty in generating joy'. The Church holds the formula for this true joy. We have something wonderful to bring to the world. It is a message which is not only true, but joyful. It is a message the world badly needs to hear, and the time is right.

It is certain that our culture has changed much in recent years, but it is just as certain that human nature has not changed one bit. I spent four years at College studying the classics, and being constantly amazed at how contemporary the writers of ancient Greece and Rome could seem, though they wrote thousands of years ago. Now I have more to do with the Old Testament, and again I have the same experience, with this difference: the sacred writers not only express the perennial problems of human nature, but also point to their definitive solution. This solution appears in the New Testament, in the person of Jesus Christ. He is our Saviour, as much now as he was then. Human nature has not changed, and the words of the Gospel are eternally valid. The formula still works.

300 A.D. in pagan Rome, or 2007 A.D. in an ever more pagan Dublin, people grow tired of pleasures that disappoint and turn to bitterness, man-made pleasures where we assert *our* greatness and will have our way; pleasures that give no joy. The Church holds the secret of that joy. It is the secret which Mary teaches us, of allowing God to be great; it is the secret of humility and the sacrifice of our will.

Of course, the teaching of Christ is not always immediately appealing. It can shock people, and it can scandalise them. Embracing his truth does involve death to oneself, which is never easy. But this is the only way to joy. In St John's Gospel Jesus uses the analogy of the woman who must endure the pain of labour in order to experience the joy of a newborn child. In the world you will have pain, he says, but your pain will turn into joy. And that joy no one will ever take from you. (Jn 16:20-22) That is what the evangeliser proposes: the secret of true joy lies in humility and self-sacrifice. It is a hard message for people to accept. But it is much easier for them to accept it if the preacher displays

⁷ *Iesu dulcis memoria*.

⁸ *Gaudete in Domino*; 9 May 1975.

its truth, if he shows that in his own life the way of the Cross has led to an experience of the Resurrection.

We find ourselves in the last few days of the Easter season. On the threshold of Pentecost, it would be wrong to end without mentioning the Holy Spirit, whom the Scriptures associate so closely with joy. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that 'the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 13:52); St Paul tells the Romans that 'the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom 14:17). But most of all we think of the Annunciation where Mary conceived her Joy when the Holy Spirit came upon her (Lk 1:35).

It is easy to forget about the Holy Spirit, perhaps because it is hard to picture him. We have the image of the dove, of course, which surmounts the Legionary vexillum. But Mary is also given to us as the human icon of the Spirit. In her we see someone who has let the Spirit enter into her life so as to make her fruitful in an extraordinary way. We should never look at Mary without thinking of the Spirit and what he can do in our lives also, if we let him, if we say yes. In these days we ask the Holy Spirit to come on us afresh. We ask him to make us, like Mary, receptive to God's will and grace. We ask him to fill us, as he filled her, with the joy of salvation. As the Holy Spirit made Mary the cause of our joy, may he make us all, both priests and laity, humble apostles of that joy.

Mary, Cause of our Joy, pray for us.



Appendices

PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD, FRANK DUFF

God our Father,

You inspired your servant Frank Duff with a profound insight into the mystery of your Church, the Body of Christ, and of the place of Mary the Mother of Jesus in this mystery.

In his immense desire to share this insight with others and in filial dependence on Mary he formed her Legion to be a sign of her maternal love for the world and a means of enlisting all her children in the Church's evangelising work.

We thank you Father for the graces conferred on him and for the benefits accruing to the Church from his courageous and shining faith.

With confidence we beg you that through his intercession you grant the petition we lay before you . . .

We ask too that if it be in accordance with your will, the holiness of his life may be acknowledged by the Church for the glory of your Name, *through Christ Our Lord, Amen.*

With ecclesiastical approval

Favours attributed to his intercession should be notified in writing to:

LEGION OF MARY, DE MONTFORT HOUSE, MORNING STAR AVENUE, BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN 7, IRELAND.

PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF VENERABLE EDEL QUINN

Eternal Father, I thank you for the grace you gave to your servant, Edel Quinn, of striving to live always in the joy of your presence, for the radiant charity infused into her heart by your Holy Spirit, and for the strength she drew from the Bread of Life to labour until death for the glory of your name, in loving dependence on Mary, Mother of the Church.

Confident, O Merciful Father, that her life was pleasing to you, I beg you to grant me, through her intercession, the special favour I now implore . . . , and to make known by miracles the glory she enjoys in Heaven, so that she may be glorified also by your Church on earth, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

With ecclesiastical approval

Favours attributed to her intercession should be notified in writing to:

LEGION OF MARY, DE MONTFORT HOUSE, MORNING STAR AVENUE, BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN 7, IRELAND.

PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD, ALPHONSUS LAMBE

O God, who by your infinite mercy inflamed the heart of your servant, Alphonsus Lambe with an ardent love for you and for Mary, our Mother; a love which revealed itself in a life of intense labour, prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of souls, grant, if it be your will, that we may obtain, by his intercession, what we cannot obtain by our own merits. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen

With ecclesiastical approval

Favours attributed to his intercession should be notified in writing to:

LEGION OF MARY, DE MONTFORT HOUSE, MORNING STAR AVENUE, BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN 7, IRELAND.

Appendix 1.

THE LEGION OF MARY

The Legion of Mary has had its international headquarters in Dublin, Ireland, since it was established in September 1921. One of its founding members was Frank Duff, a Dubliner who was a Civil Servant until he took early retirement in 1933. Operating in 182 countries throughout the world, the Legion is one of the largest lay apostolic movements in the Church. Baptism obliges each Catholic to be apostolic. The Legion of Mary sees itself as just one vehicle enabling a definite weekly apostolic contribution to be made by a Catholic.

In all there are 275 councils directly affiliated to the Concilium. Each of these councils governs the Legion in its own territory which is aligned to the dioceses of the Church. Between active and auxiliary (praying) members there are in excess of 10 million members worldwide. Membership is highest in South Korea, Philippines, Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These countries have between 250,000 and 500,000 members each. Membership of the Legion of Mary involves attendance at a weekly meeting and assignment of two hours per week of active apostolic work. Each group, called a Praesidium, works in a parish by kind permission of the Parish Priest. The object of the Legion is for the member to come closer to God in union with Our Blessed Lady. The Legion of Mary also has specialised Praesidia for prisoners, the homeless, refugees, for those with various disabilities, women working on the streets and many other disadvantaged people. It has an outreach for everyone making no distinction of race, class, colour or creed.

The Causes of three members of the Legion of Mary have been introduced: by the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya for Venerable Edel Quinn (born in Kanturk, Co. Cork); by the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, Argentina for the Servant of God Alphonsus Lambe (born in Tullamore, Co. Offaly) and by the Archdiocese of Dublin for the Servant of God Frank Duff (born in Dublin).



**THE SERVANT OF GOD,
FRANK DUFF**



**VENERABLE
EDEL QUINN**



**THE SERVANT OF GOD,
ALPHONSUS LAMBE**

Appendix 2.

CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHS



Tommy McCabe, President Concilium Legionis Mariae, Most Reverend Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland and Fr. Bede McGregor O.P., Concilium Spiritual Director and Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God Frank Duff



Most Reverend Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican, His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Prefect, Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, Vatican and His Excellency Most Reverend Giuseppe Lazzarotto, Apostolic Nuncio.



Fr. Bede McGregor, O.P., Concilium Spiritual Director and Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God Frank Duff and His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Prefect, Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.



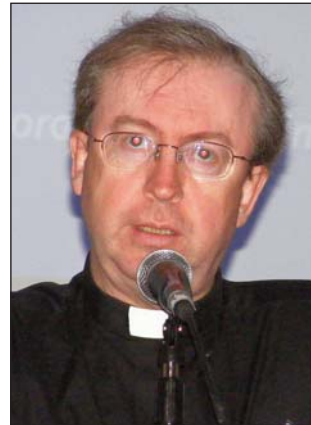
*Pictured left:
Fr. Florian Calice, Spiritual
Director, Legion of Mary
Senatus, Austria.*



*Pictured right:
Aileen O'Donoghue,
Concilium Officer,
Legion of Mary Dublin.*



*Pictured left:
Monsignor Andrew Vissanu
Thanya-Anan,
Counsellor at Papal
Nunciature.*



*Pictured right:
Fr. Pádraig Ó Cochláin*



*Fr. Paul Churchill, Associate Judicial Vicar, Marriage Tribunal, Archdiocese of Dublin,
Fr. Pádraig Ó Cochláin, Fr. Gerard Deighan, Lecturer in Scripture, Milltown and Mater Dei Institutes,
and Declan Lawlor, Concilium Officer.*



His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Prefect, Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, Vatican and Fr. Ronnie Neville.



*His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect,
Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican
and Fr. Bede McGregor O.P., Concilium Spiritual Director
and Postulator for the Cause of
the Servant of God Frank Duff*

*Catherine Murphy, Concilium Officer, and Fr. John Hogan,
applaud speakers at the Conference.*



*His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican
and Tommy McCabe, President Concilium Legionis Mariae.*



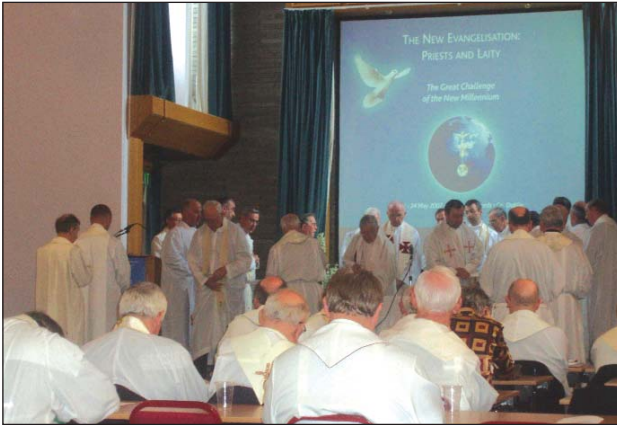
Liam Hayden, Concilium Officer, Legion of Mary, greeting His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican. Pictured back (l to r): Father Nelson Medina O.P., Spiritual Director of Bethlehem Curia, His Excellency Most Reverend Giuseppe Lazzarotto, the Papal Nuncio, Anne Cahalan and Tommy McCabe, President Concilium Legionis Mariae



Pictured clockwise from top left: Fr. Brendan Leahy, Professor of Systematic Theology, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, His Excellency Most Reverend Giuseppe Lazzarotto, Apostolic Nuncio, His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Prefect, Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, Vatican and His Eminence Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship, Vatican.



Tommy Gibbons, Legionary, His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Prefect, Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, Vatican, Tommy McCabe, President Concilium Legionis Mariae and Fr. Bede McGregor O.P., Concilium Spiritual Director and Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God Frank Duff standing at Frank Duff's grave, Glasnevin, Dublin, Ireland.



Celebration of the Eucharist during the Conference.



CONCILIVM LEGIONIS MARIAE

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