

Maria Legionis



Maria Legionis

The Voice of the Legion of Mary

Edition 3 of 2016

€1.00



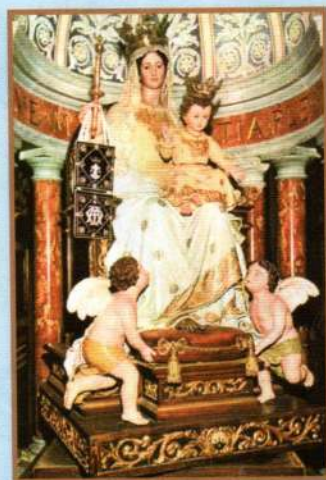
St Louis Marie's Way is Pope St John Paul's Way - <i>Frank Duff</i>	3
An Early Legion Figure - Fr Michael Creedon - Part 1 of 2 - <i>Frank Duff</i>	13
A Reflection on Our Lady - <i>Fr Patrick Hannon</i>	17
Michael Ekeng - <i>Enda Dunleavy</i>	20
Praises of Mary	28
Frank Duff Ceremony Dublin 2016 - <i>Síle Ní Chochlain</i>	29
World News	33

STELLA MARIS MONASTERY, MOUNT CARMEL, HAIFA, ISRAEL

The fire which burns in true legionary hearts springs only from the ashes of lowly and unworldly qualities. Particular among these is the virtue of humility, so misunderstood and despised by the world. Yet, it is noble and strong, and confers a strange nobility and strength on those who seek it and practice it.

In the Legion system, humility plays a unique part. In the first place, it is an essential instrument of the legionary apostolate. For, the effecting and developing of the personal contact, on which the Legion relies so largely in its work, calls for workers with gentle, unassuming manners such as are derived only from true humility of heart. But humility is more to the Legion than a mere instrument of its external action. It is the very cradle of that action. Without humility there can be no effective legionary action.

LEGION HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 6, SECTION 2



Published by: Maria Legionis, Presentata House, 263 North Circular Road, Dublin 7, Ireland, DO7 NC43. Tel: + 353 1 8387770.

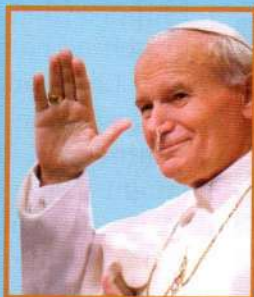
Magazine enquiries - e-mail: marialegonis@eircom.net

Annual Subscription, including postage, €8.00 per 4 copies.

Design: MacArt, Dublin, Ireland, Tel: + 353 1 2852508. Email: macart@indigo.ie
Print: Watermans Printers Ltd., Suite 4, Shanowen Business Centre, Santry, Dublin 9, Ireland

ST. LOUIS MARIE'S WAY IS ALSO POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S WAY

by Frank Duff



Sometimes the true Devotion is viewed as a fad but it is anything but that. The false idea is ministered to by the language of extreme devotion which is De Montfort's speciality.

Sometimes he does appear to be speaking in terms of excess, but it is vital to recognise that there is no theological excess in his propositions. The notable fact that the new Holy Father should at the outset of his reign proclaim himself a follower of that Devotion should be enough to demonstrate this.

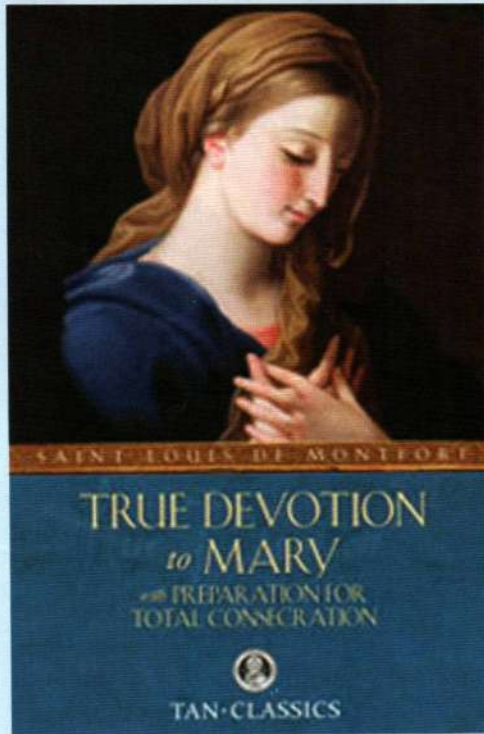
However, the circumstances that so many do not take it up and that many are found who are opposed to it, is evidence that it presents certain

difficulties and that it has to be explained. Perhaps I am in a good position myself for attempting that task because every possible difficulty presented itself to me when originally I came in touch with De Montfort's book. I think that these obstacles would normally have prevailed but things of an unusual character peremptorily intervened to reverse the balance.

So perhaps you will bear with this preamble. Not all prefaces have utility but I think this one has. So I ask your patience while I plough through the tale of my original contact with the Book at the age of about twenty-nine up to when I had not even as much as heard of De Montfort. The time was not long after the St. Vincent de Paul Society had acquired Myra House.



One evening I passed a group of the Brothers who were listening to one of their number talking. I stopped to listen and found that he had a book in his hands which he was animatedly discussing. It was the True Devotion. His description did not hold me but I did learn its name and its author.



Although I did not realise it, that casual happening set off a chain-reaction of impulses or events which were destined to have important consequences for me. The first one came very shortly afterwards when I was looking through the shelves of one of the second-hand bookshops which at that time thronged the Quays. I spotted a copy of the True Devotion and as sufficient curiosity had been awakened in me by the account I had so recently listened to I

bought it for the sum of four old pence. It proved to be a find in another direction; it was the first English edition of the True Devotion, translated by Father Faber and printed in Dublin. I still have it.

At once I proceeded to the reading of it. The result was a sort of crisis in me. I suppose that I would have regarded myself as having some devotion to Our Lady but it certainly did not surpass the dimension of the sentimental. It was what we were taught in the Catechism of the day. Mary was included in a general section on the saints and we were told that it was "lawful" to be devout to her. In other words not a sin, a ludicrous description which would almost amount to placing it in the same category as backing horses or moderate drinking. With that grudging teaching it was remarkable that the popular attitude rose to what it did.

PUT ON A SHELF BUT NOT FOR LONG

In my case I had not the degree of knowledge which would be necessary to absorb the True Devotion. Indeed it seemed to me to border on the absurd. But I did manage to persevere to the end. However I had had enough. I put it on a shelf and I do not think that I would ever have opened it again. My reading had created a prejudice against it. But that was where the chain effect came into play. Very shortly afterwards I made the



acquaintance of Tom Fallon, a leading member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a prominent Civil Servant, and altogether a remarkable personage. He died in Mexico some years ago at the age of about ninety-six. He had served there as a Priest from the early 1920s, including the Obregon Persecution at its height.

A question which he very soon put to me was if I had read the True Devotion. My answer that I had, brought the further query: what did I think of it? Tom could be brusque in his manner and my reply that I had been unimpressed by the Book brought down on me the suggestion that I had not read it with attention; that I had only skimmed thought it. The book was a supreme classic in its field, necessary knowledge, and it was due to myself that I understand it.

So I took the True Devotion in hand again and went carefully through it. The result was the same as before. There was an abyss between what it set forth and what I possessed. I so reported to Tom Fallon.

I now regard it as strange that he did not seek to interrogate me in regard to the defects which bulked so big to me and which were not visible to him at all. How many times this performance was gone through of compelling a re-reading by me, I cannot precisely say. Let me put it at

half a dozen times. No specific result seemed to emerge from each new reading, and yet each one appeared to have the quality of a step towards an objective. And that was exactly what things worked out to. I was engaged on the final forced reading when a sort of phenomenon accomplished itself. Without any process of thought leading up to it, something which I could but regard as a Divine favour was granted to me. It was the sudden realisation that the Book was true. But why should this be? I did not understand things any more than I had previously. But there it was: a complete conviction that what I had been regarding as exaggerated and unreal was fully justified.

IT WAS ALL TRUE, HOW I KNEW NOT

That moment has remained in my mind with an absolute clarity. I have only to think of it and it stands before me in its original startling complexion. In that moment I knew that the Book was true.

What effect had this upon me? Very roughly I would say that it was twofold. I saw that the fault was mainly in myself. I lacked a whole field of knowledge in regard to Our Lady which was necessary for the comprehending of her position as presented by the Saint. I would have to face up to the fact that I really knew nothing about her.



The second part of this thought was that De Montfort was not writing for such as me but for a theologically educated class who possessed the foundation which the book required. He was presuming a knowledge of that foundation.

The point arises: Was Tom Fallon doing the same in regard to me? Was he making the mistake of supposing that I had the knowledge which would enable me to appreciate the Book? And could that be the reason why at no stage did he probe or argue with me as to why I was not attuned to the Book!

All these things thrashed around in my mind but finally settled into a peremptory conclusion. It was that I must get hold of the knowledge which De Montfort was presuming. In that stage things remained for a while. Not knowing exactly how to find what I wanted, I took no action.

But the action came. It imposed itself by virtue of that chain-reaction to which I have already referred. Perhaps it strikes a wrong note to say that it imposed itself on me. For when the transaction is analysed I had in a sense earned the succession of links. I had followed up each one as it had presented itself. I had bought the book merely on the strength of hearing someone commend it to a group. I had then read it attentively. It was not my fault that I failed to get its message. When the next set of links, which were Tom Fallon's interventions, asserted themselves I

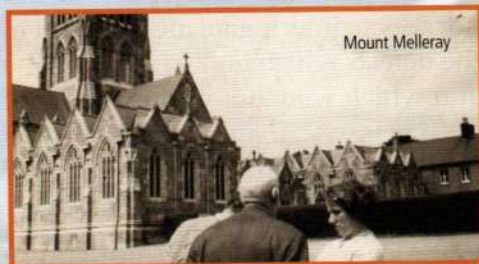
yielded meekly in a manner which was not exactly typical of me. At the end of that particular series of links, perhaps it could be said that I had qualified to receive yet another impulse.

Have I to point out that I was discovering for myself the procedure which the Legion calls Symbolic Action or the 39 Steps. In difficulties take a step in faith. This sets in motion a succession of them until the crowning one arrives.

DE CONCILIO SUPPLIES THE ANSWER

The next step was of a completely different type and in another field. As an act of helpfulness to a friend I paid my first visit to Mount Melleray. The next chain-reaction met me so to speak on the monastery doorstep.

The Guest Master asked me if I would wish to have some book. "A book", I exclaimed, his question producing quite a shock in me. "O yes, I do particularly want a book, I want one on the theology of the Blessed Virgin, one which is deep enough to give me the fullness of her position but at the same time simple enough for me to understand". He promised me to look around in their library.





Soon after he came to me with a book, it was entitled "The Knowledge of Mary" and it was by a Father Joseph de Concilio. It contained three hundred pages and a first glance through them suggested that it was rather deep. I started off at once on it. I had not gone far before I was seized with the same sort of excitement which had come to me when the True Devotion had suddenly revealed itself to me.

Because de Concilio was the very thing that I was looking for, it was exactly for me. It was completely comprehensible but it was likewise most complete in what it taught on its subject. It began to unfold to me the entrancing but true eminence of the Woman on whom God had built His whole scheme from all eternity.

It was the perfect introduction to the True Devotion. Nothing better from my point of view could be conceived. As I went on, it filled every gap and met every difficulty which had troubled me. The light that it afforded was so suitable to me that I could not but look on the book as rather a wondrous gift. As I have said, it was another emotional and intellectual experience for me.

A SENSE OF DESPERATION

But a great apprehension flooded into me. I saw this book as essential to me. I would be able to get through it during my stay in the monastery. But would I remember it? As it seemed to me, I could not afford to run the chance of being parted from it. I must be able to study it and perhaps learn it off by heart. The title page told me that the book was published by a

New York firm called Barclay in 1878. This was ominous. Would I be able to secure a copy? Strange to say, the idea of asking the monastery for a loan of the book did not occur to me. I was unknown to the monks, and I felt that there would be some firm rule against lending books from their library to birds of passage like myself. I did not even think of asking.

I had recourse to a counsel of desperation. I began to copy out practically its entire contents. At this I worked late and long. As I was also rising very early for the first Masses, this copying task was an immense burden, but it was preemptory. I did not dare to risk being deprived of that treasure of knowledge. However the exhaustion of the performance was repaid by the fact that it helped to fix indelibly in my memory all the wonderful material that it offered. As a total transaction I have assigned in my Marian philosophy an equal rating to those two books, De Montfort and De Concilio. It took the second one to open the first to me, so that I have always thought of them as interdependent halves in this teaching operation which turned my life upside down.



I am not contending that the study of a book like Concilio is now a necessary preliminary to the proper understanding of the True Devotion. I see very many persons around me take up the latter and read it with apparently a full appreciation. But this always puzzles me because not all of them have what I have been calling the foundation. Yet they eagerly receive the illuminated picture which St. Louis-Marie projects of Mary and they give it full play in their lives. I have to confess that I do not understand how this operates.

THE LEGION HANDBOOK SUPPLIES THE DOCTRINAL BASIS

For legionaries this whole problem hardly arises. The Handbook gives them the foundation in a simple form. Mary walks through its pages from the first to the last. The place assigned by God to her is adequately covered. In fact the Handbook can be regarded as a simplified but all the same elevated summary of such a book as Concilio. Effort is made to include every phase of her being and to link it to aspects of the legionary apostolate so that they explain each other, and in such fashion that Mary becomes the motive for each item of the apostolate. This is achieved so sufficiently as to produce in the ordinary body of the legionaries a limitless generosity and a veritable heroism. What I hesitantly describe as the selecter half of the Legion are

certainly giving themselves in a princely manner. There would appear to be nothing of which they are not capable. One is tempted to apply widely to the Legion the valuation given to the Chinese legionaries by Cardinal Riberi, namely that their stature is that of the first Christians, nothing less.

Actually the doctrine and fire of the True Devotion is so blended into the Legion Handbook that even if the True Devotion were not being mentioned, it would still amount to much the same thing. It is an interesting circumstance that persons who reject the True Devotion are found accepting the Handbook without the slightest demur. They recoil from the De Montfort Consecration but they recite with readiness the Legion Promise which is just as wholesale as the Consecration.

THE "TRUE DEVOTION" SETS DOCTRINE ALIGHT

In these circumstances the Legion could no doubt get along without the True Devotion, and of course in many places it has to do so by reason of its being unavailable in the particular languages.

But this is due to the amount that the Legion has already sucked into its bloodstream from the True devotion.

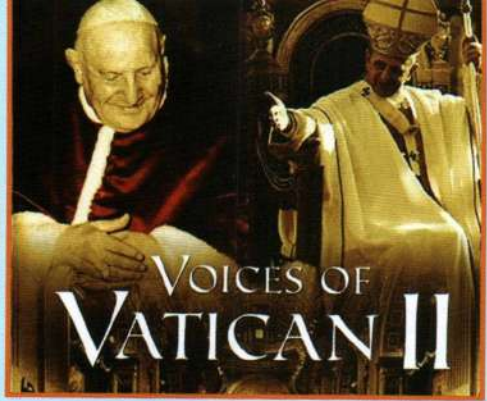
This is a continuing process. Much more remains to be assimilated? The fact is that one cannot emphasise too much the value of the True Devotion as a supplement to the handbook and the entire Legion system. St. Louis-Marie's words of fire uplift Our Lady from the level of pure doctrine and give her substance as a person, Our Mother with intimate charge of our lives, utterly indispensable to us, our Queen, our leader, the very thought of whom inspires courage and stimulates one to undertake the impossible.

Apart altogether from the special relation which the True Devotion would have towards the Legion, the book should be read for its uniqueness. Among the works written on the Blessed Virgin there is no other even remotely like it. One cannot name another and say: this is second! It just stands out like a pillar on a hill.

Such being the Legion's valuation of the book, it would form a disastrous position if many legionaries are not giving it a proper place in their lives, because the loss to themselves is thereby great.

DEFENDING OUR LADY'S POSITION

Furthermore it must not be thought that the cause of Our Lady is now so firm as to need no defenders. The opposite is the case, a most strange position having produced itself as the result of Vatican II. That body



proposed as one of its principal aims to elevate common Mariological teaching to the point which the operations of the Legion had shown to be within the reach of the ordinary people. To that end it composed Chapter VIII of the De Ecclesia Decree which brought things up to the level which the Legion had been teaching its members, while at the same time not exceeding that level. This is intriguing as indicating that the Council considered that the Legion afforded a norm was to what the ordinary rank and file of the Church as capable of receiving.

Nevertheless the unexpected sequel followed of a set-back in regard to Marian Devotion. This is peculiar in view of the advanced teaching of Chapter VIII. It can only be explained by the fact that the Council had decided to substitute for a separate Decree on the subject of Our Lady a chapter in the Decree on the Church. A specious deduction would be that a chapter is less than a Decree. Also one has to be more reserved in a general Decree in order to maintain due proportion. But the gain from being so emphatically set out as part of essential Church doctrine far outweighs the loss of separateness.



Of course time will soon redress the balance. In the meantime the presence of the Legion in the field has assumed an added importance. It is the special custodian and propagator among the people of the correct role of Our Lady. For this reason the Legion must give special heed and prominence to the True Devotion as a sovereign means of maintaining its own spirit.

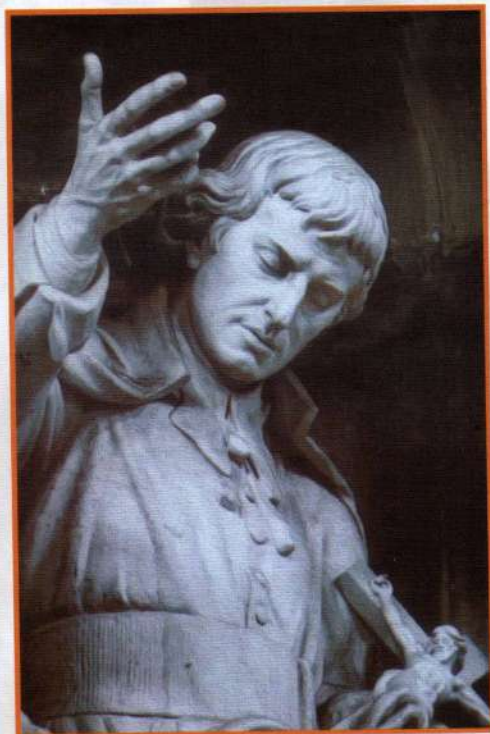
TOTAL CONSECRATION OR "SLAVERY"

So far I have been speaking in general terms of the True Devotion, more of its quality as a proclamation about Mary than as a special devotion to her. But the Book declares its purpose to be the establishment of a system of devotion to her. It calls this the Slavery or total consecration to Our Lady. It is an anomaly that thereby the Book places certain difficulties in its own way. Many persons are alienated from the devotion and consecration by practices which the Saint recommends and for this reason turn away from the Book itself.

This is unfortunate for every reason. A particular reason is that the essential of his Devotion does not consist in the things which those people recoil from but in its abiding spirit of unity and dependence on Our Lady.

The word "Slavery" evokes among some an irrational antipathy as if we were obliged to adopt the mentality of an earthly slavery.

Also De Montfort's prescribing of the wearing of a chain to keep us in mind of our subjection to Our Lady stirs up dislike. I point out that if this attitude of sheer sentimentality were allowed to run away with things, it could tell with equivalent force against our use of the Crucifix. Why do not those objectors rail against it as introducing into our minds a disgraceful and out-of-date barbarism associated with vile criminals and their dire punishment? But it is for that very reason that we are devoted to the Crucifix; it makes vivid to us what Jesus took on Himself for our sake.



I repeat that the chains and penitential practices proposed by St. Louis-Marie are not essential to his Devotion.

But certainly they cannot be ruled out as aids towards the acquiring of the central idea which is that of a realisation of our total dependence on Mary, our Mother. God Himself has placed us in that condition and it extends to extremes far beyond our capacity to measure them. Slavery may seem to be a deprived state, but as the Handbook points out, it leaves the mind and soul free and is little in comparison with the extremity of union, dependence and love which we should endeavour to cultivate in ourselves towards our exquisite Queen and Mother. This is due from us as part of our ordinary Catholic state and not because St. Louis Marie de Montfort enjoins it. His position is that of reminding us that it is due from us, rather than of imposing it on us.

In that same sense that it is the inner spirit of the Devotion that counts more than the practices which are entailed, the very form of Consecration recommended by the True Devotion could be left out. But this would be going too far in the opposite direction and would risk in the end our slipping out of the Devotion altogether. We are composed of body and spirit, and each lives out of the other. Therefore the True Devotion for reality and permanence must possess some bodily or tangible form.

LEGION TRIES TO REPAY ITS DEBT TO DE MONTFORT

As to the taking on of the Devotion in some practical way, I could not speak too strongly. In the first place I have seen the Legion itself arise at the mere touch of De Montfort on an interested group. At once that band expanded into the Legion. Of course he must have been keeping a sort of vigil, awaiting that moment ever since he prophesied it more than two hundred years previously. "I look forward", he says, "to a great legion of brave and valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, of both sexes, to combat the world, the devil and corrupted nature in those more than ever perilous times which are to come".

But the union between the Legion and the Saint went further than his breathing of life into it. He would have to continue to nurture it, and the Legion should of necessity admit its obligation to him. In a strange and potent fashion the Legion was enabled to do this. Though he had died in 1716 in the odour of sanctity, his Cause for Canonisation lagged on the way and seemed to come to a standstill with his Beatification by Leo XIII. But the spread of the Legion out over the world made him one of the most invoked Saints in the Church and supplied what had been the missing element, the popular estimation or cultus. And at once Rome acted. Not only was he canonised in 1947 but his statue was placed in a lordly position in St. Peter's, prominent amongst the greatest ones.



“I LOOK FORWARD”, HE SAYS, “TO A GREAT LEGION OF BRAVE AND VALIANT SOLDIERS OF JESUS AND MARY”

ON HOW TO READ IT

Now may I put the question: what is the best way to read his book and to practice his Devotion, for these operations must go together as a twin. I would be inclined to say that the very best method would lie in the reading of a page of the True Devotion every day, but in the manner of a prayer or meditation, seeking to drain the idea and spirit even of each word into our minds, accepting what it declares as a message to us from him; rejecting the notion that the very strong expressions which all the time proceed from his lips about the Blessed Virgin represent in the slightest degree unjustified embellishment of her. For there I think is the very charm and virtue of the book: that it can appear so often to be parting company from reality and plunging into a fantastic, extravagant world of its own. But beware when you find yourself imagining that such is the case, because there is no exaggeration and no fantasy. No book ever passed through such an ordeal by fire and emerged so triumphantly as this one has.

Moreover Mary's vastness exceeds our capacity to exaggerate her. Our intelligence really cannot compass her. Necessarily God's masterpiece evades our full understanding so that when luminous glimpses are afforded to us we find the light too much.

So again I urge it. Read the book regularly in the spirit of complete acceptance. Dwell on its different parts. Capture its soaring ideas and receive them into yourself as by very faith. In this way will the real Mary show herself to you and be able to exert her full maternal sway over you. Thus will you make your passage through this life worthwhile, what it is supposed to be.



SO AGAIN I URGE IT. READ THE BOOK REGULARLY IN THE SPIRIT OF COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE.

Frank Duff

REV. FATHER MICHAEL CREEDON

FRANK DUFF'S TALK
GIVEN AT A REUNION OF
VENERANDA CURIA, DUBLIN

DURING THE REUNION SEASON I HAVE BEEN TAKING UP SOME FIGURE OR OTHER OF THE PAST WHO WAS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEGION, THOUGH NOT IN THE CAPACITY OF A MEMBER. EACH ONE OF THEM I TOUCHED ON REPRESENTED A HERO OF THE APOSTOLATE BUT WHOSE RECOLLECTION WAS DISAPPEARING FROM THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE.

It is a good thing to be conscious of the fact that one is working for God and not for the appreciation of men, because the latter is a frail quality. Moreover, its life is short. I reckon that the ultimate span that separates great merit from oblivion is fifty years, that is, the span of one man's life.

When you talk in terms of persons who lived before that period, people look strangely at you. They regard you as Rip van Winkle come back from pre-history. The only chance that you have of lasting longer than that in people's minds is where for

some cause or another one has inserted oneself into the history books, which of course is a rare occurrence, and unfortunately more reserved for the evil than for the good.

Mostly I have dealt with non-Legionaries who had played a part in regard to the Legion. But I am shocked to find that as time passes, our own great figures of the past are being absorbed into that fog of forgetfulness. You mention one of their names and you are met by a blank look and the question: Who is he or she?



So I am going to talk to you this evening of one of our own very great pillars. It is Father Creedon, he was not only an original Legionary but an indispensable one. He shaped the spirit and structure of the Legion and helped it to grow. I am going to give him to you as I saw him.

He was not present at the actual starting of the Legion. At that time he was out in Garristown, North County Dublin.

Just to give you a little colour in regard to that place, I mention that it was in Fingalia, an ancient Danish settlement. In 1921 that place was very isolated for anyone who did not possess a car, and cars at that time were rare possessions. There was no bus service, no train service. It was due largely to the enterprise of Father Creedon that a bus was purchased as a communal property of the residents, which made a daily trip into Dublin and back again. I think actually that it was the first long distance service in all Ireland. (laughter) Like many another good man, Fr. Creedon was born in Cork, actually at Macroom. A brother of his also became a priest. Unless that date has become too remote for you to go back to, you will know that the Legion started in 1921. Fr. Creedon was transferred to Francis Street Parish about three months after that date. I remember vividly Fr. Toher telling me of the new arrival and described him as a big great-hearted jolly man. He was every bit of that description. I met him of course and

we became firm friends from the moment of our first encounter.

We must read into this the operation of grace, because it was designed that we would work together in an exceptionally close way. He threw himself into the multiple operations of the Legion as a duck would take to water. He proceeded to attend all the meetings of the Legion which meant that the first praesidium, only in existence for a while, was frequently favoured by having two wonderful priests at it. They would share the giving of the Allocutio. As other branches came into being they would have to divide up.

It is a strange circumstance that Fr. Creedon is not included in the Anniversary group of the Legion (first anniversary group) which we published as a cover picture to Maria Legionis a couple of years ago. He would normally have been there as he always was at such gatherings. There must have been some very important rival engagement to keep him away from us on that rather notable day which was being chronicled for history by photography.

I think it must have been the first time I met him that I told him of Bidy Slicker's Lodging House, No. 25 Chancery Lane, where lived thirty young street girls. No good approach was ever made to that house. I lamented this to Fr. Creedon and sketched out for him some rather fantastic notions I had in the way of opening a Lodging House for them.

He did not make much comment on that matter but the seed fell in fertile soil and soon produced its hundred-fold.

It was in this manner: In July 1922 Fr. Ignatius Gibney, a celebrated and spectacular Passionist Father, was giving a week's Retreat to the women of Francis Street Parish. During it Fr. Creedon brought him down to Slicker's. The girls were assembled and the two priests spoke to them in holy and gentle accents. The result was sensational. The girls all exploded into tears and declared their desire to be good. But how could they be? No one would employ them!

Fr. Creedon's reaction to that was typical of him. He extracted a promise from the girls that they would abstain from the streets until he could do something for them. Then he interviewed Bidy Slicker and agreed to make her a daily payment to provide for the girls' lodgings and keep. The sequence was the momentous Baldoyle Retreat and the establishment of the first Legion Hostel – Sancta Maria.

The Legion had made its step of destiny down into the underworld. I do not here seek to cover the detail of that Retreat and the opening of the Hostel because an extended knowledge of those events is available to you in the book known as "*Miracles on Tap*".

Miracles on Tap

Frank Duff



BEFORE BEING IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH WAS A HOUSE OF THE LADY WHICH WAS THE HOUSE OF MARY AS WAS THE LEGION OF MARY

Shepherd Publications

"he was not only an original Legionary but an indispensable one."



If you wish to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Legion it is up to you to read that account..

I sum up those days by saying that in them, Fr. Creedon emerged in his true stature. He rode the whirlwind and he guided the storm. He became the pivotal figure in that particular work

His capacity for handling those girls and indeed all the down and out types, both men and women, was unrivalled, phenomenal we might say. At each of the many upsets which crowded upon us, one after the other, every eye turned to him. It was for him to deal with the case.

It was he in the company of Fr. Devane and myself, who paid the fateful visit to Mr. Cosgrave, which resulted in our obtaining the premises No. 76 Harcourt Street.

As was afterwards suggested the Hostel was opened and carried on without ecclesiastical permission, I must correct that statement and place on record the fact that the moment that the girls were gathered together in the house, Fr. Creedon and Fr. Toher went to Msgr. Fitzpatrick of Harrington Street, then Dean of the Diocese and acquainted him with the full position. He gave them not only an unreserved but enthusiastic permission to run the Hostel. This included the right to hear Confessions in the house, which is a privilege not lightly granted. He formally appointed Fr. Creedon to be

in charge of the work. This inaugurated a thrilling time of heroic Faith, of exciting adventure and of great miracles. Very soon we were drawn into the epic of Bentley Place.



It was Fr. Creedon who came with me to Canon Flanagan the Administrator of Marlborough Street when permission was given to enter that district. Immediately afterwards, he and I waited on the Priest of the section into which the evil territory fell. I do not give you the details of the Bentley Place campaign but once again refer you to that book, *Miracles on Tap*.

The first governing body of the Legion was the Curia of Dublin. As first priest of the Legion Fr. Toher became its Spiritual Director. As soon as the Legion began to expand outside Dublin the Curia added on the function of Concilium. Fr. Toher decided to try his vocation in a Foreign Missionary Order and went to Mexico. He did not stay. He returned to Dublin, but while he was away Fr. Creedon assumed the Spiritual Directorship of the Concilium which ever after remained in his hands. When he died Fr. Toher succeeded him.

A Reflection

ON OUR LADY *by Fr Pat Hannon*

The Handbook says that at this point the priest explains the significance of the Act of Consecration and I'll do that briefly in a moment. But first let me share some reflections that this occasion and these days have prompted.

I was looking recently at some old Irish poems about Mary, poems from as far back as the sixth century. The oldest were composed by monks in the monasteries established all over Ireland in the centuries after Patrick brought the Gospel here.

They were composed by monks, so they reflected what in a sense was the 'official' thinking of the Irish church about the place of Our Lady in God's plan. But they reflected also the devotion of ordinary people, the way that Irish Christian people thought about Mary, and the way they addressed her in prayer.

And the first thing that strikes you is how often Mary comes into their thinking and their prayers. There are poems that are addressed to her directly, and they tell us what our forebears thought of her. 'A Mhuire

na nGrás, a mháthair Mhic Dé, go gcuireadh tú ar mo leas mé: Mary of graces, mother of the Son of God, guard me and guide me always' – one way to translate it. She is our protectress and our guide.

But even more revealing sometimes are the give-away words and phrases that you see in other hymns and poems. Jesus is often addressed or referred to as 'Son of Mary', and sometimes the poet mentions 'your mother Mary', or 'his mother Mary'. If you did a word-count on the computer the spiritual literature in Ireland from those early times down to our own, Mary's name would come up often.

What that tells us is that devotion to Mary has been deep in our culture, is in our Irish DNA, in the genes, and it's been passed on down the centuries. So it's in us here today, not just because you and I were brought up in the faith, but because those who have gone before us honoured her, placed her highly in their grasp of the Gospel that Patrick brought, the Gospel of Jesus son of God, but son of Mary too.



A second thing is noticeable in the hymns and poems that those monks and many later poets wrote: that Mary is often seen as someone you could go to when you wanted God's help. It's understood that she can intercede for us, ask God's grace for us, in a way that has to be efficacious, for she is Mother of the God made flesh.

There's one poem where she's mentioned in a way that would make you smile. The speaker is addressing St Peter, keeper of the keys of heaven, and he's begging Peter to make sure to let him in when he arrives at the gates. But then it occurs to him that there might be a need for back-up; and he calls on Mary to go after Peter, to help him make his case to Peter; surely if she does, Peter can't turn him down.

That idea of Mary interceding for us is one that was dear to Frank Duff, is a prominent part of the spirituality of the Legion always: Mary as Mediatrix, a mother who'll speak for us because she's our mother, and someone whose intercession must count immensely because she's the Mother of our Lord. That bond with us is crucially important in the Catholic way of looking at our Lady. Mary is Queen of the Legion, and Queen is a title of great honour even in this modern day of republics. She is Queen of the Legion because Queen of Heaven, and she is entitled to the greatest reverence from all of God's people, worthy of the highest tributes that down through the centuries our

tradition has paid her. She is 'of God' in a singular way; but she is also one of us, and we must never let our reverence and our awe blind us to her humanity, or stop us from invoking her help.



The feast of the Annunciation is coming soon, and tomorrow we begin to recall the great events of our salvation, Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The Annunciation and the Crucifixion are a kind of frame for our picture of Mary: the Annunciation because it tells us what her response to God's call was, the Crucifixion because she is to be found with her Son at the end, standing at the foot of his cross, as John depicts the last moments of Jesus.



Many spiritual writers have pondered Mary's Yes: 'Be it done unto me, according to your word'. And they've stressed that she was free to say no; and as Jesus's life unfolded - sometimes puzzlingly for her and Joseph - being human, she must sometimes have wondered whether she was right. But God was with her always, and she had a mother's love, and she was with her Son to the end.

A modern Irish poet has captured something of what all of this meant for Mary and for us - Gabriel Fitzmaurice, in a poem called simply Mary:

'Hail full of grace'
the angel, uninvited
came to your place
and your word united.

Heaven and hell, Above, Below
God needed you to say
'Behold the handmaid';
had you said 'No'
where was God today?'



In our Act of Consecration we say 'I am all yours. My Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is yours'. Our commitment, our response to the invitation to serve in the Legion, is to be as humble as Mary's was to the angel; as whole-hearted as hers was despite her fears; as enduring as hers, the mother at the foot of the Cross.

And maybe we'll remember what our Kerry poet wrote: 'God needed you to say / Behold the handmaid; had you said No / where was God today?' And if we say No, where is God today?

Fr Patrick Hannon is an emeritus professor of moral theology at Maynooth. He holds a doctorate in Law from Cambridge and is a member of the Irish Bar. He was formerly chairman of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. He has published several books including *Moral Decision Making* (2005) and *Moral Theology: A Reader* (2006), both published by Veritas.



MICHAEL STEPHEN EKENG


(1888 - 1958)

The life of Michael
Stephen Ekeng
is a true religious
saga from the
heart of Africa.

Born in 1888 to an animist family in the southeast of Nigeria in a village close to Arochuku, Ekeng experienced in his young days the rigours of slavery. But he was able to preserve his interior liberty to find and reach God, first through Protestantism and then through Catholicism. He attained a high level of spirituality through the Legion of Mary and the marian spirituality of St. Louis Marie De Montfort which it engenders.

Still a slave, he becomes a Christian...and buys his freedom.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Arochuku enjoyed a certain renown because of a large idol which was prominent there. Dragged before this sculpture of fearsome visage, people accused of various crimes received its verdict ...and many disappeared without trace. The idol was feared far and wide. In actual fact, it was a strategem to capture slaves and sell them at the coast.



*Still a slave, he
becomes a Christian
...and buys his freedom.*

Although forbidden by the civil government, this commerce in human beings was still flourishing in the region.

One day Ekeng and his brother Kalu, aged 6 and 8 years respectively, were returning from the well where they had gone to draw water for their mother. Suddenly they were seized, led into the forest and thrown into a hut beside a creek, their arms and legs securely tied. At nightfall, they were carried to a canoe which was soon boarded by a team of oarsmen. The journey started and by morning they had reached the Cross River. The voyage continued all day and by evening they had reached Calabar, about 100 miles from their point of departure. Both boys were sold as slaves. They would not see each other for another 45 years.

The master who bought Ekeng was an Efik chieftain, a resident of Calabar. He was a Christian, a member of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. Ekeng was a lively child and learned very quickly the tasks required of a kitchen boy and won the confidence of his master. The latter, noticing that the boy was intelligent, had him accompany him to Sunday service. Noticing his interest in the ceremonies, he allowed him to attend catechism....and this led to his baptism with the name Stephen. As the Chief had a bible, probably the Efik version which the Mission published at this time, he had Ekeng read from it when the domestic work of the day was finished, a task which Ekeng loved as he had a thirst for the things of God. His master then sent him to the school run by the Scottish mission. Ekeng, thus dividing his time between kitchen duties and school, passed through adolescence. Noticing in Ekeng a docile pupil, the director of the school saw also in him the makings of a future teacher at the mission and when a suitable

opportunity presented itself, appointed him an assistant tutor with a small salary. This enabled him in due course to buy his liberty. It is recorded that the amount involved was £50 sterling. He completed his formation with five years at the Hope Waddel Institute and obtained a teacher's certificate.

FROM PROTESTANTISM TO CATHOLICISM...

For 14 years, Ekeng was to devote himself as a teacher in the service of the Scottish mission. It was noted that he was as attentive to the moral formation of the pupils as he was to their intellectual formation. Saddened by the standards of behaviour he sometimes saw around him, he tried to inculcate into them by word and by example a sense of honesty and integrity. He seems even at this early time to have chosen to remain celibate. His restless intelligence led him to question many things.



The religious doctrine that he was commissioned to teach seemed somehow incomplete to his searching mind. The Presbyterian Church had been the first Christian mission to be established at Calabar, beginning in 1850 at the beginning of the English colonisation and by now a dominant influence along



Fr. Joseph Shanahan

this coastal region. Then, in 1885, the Holy Ghost Fathers – founded by Venerable Liberman – set up a mission at Onitsha in the neighbouring Ibo Territory and in 1905 gave charge of the Calabar area to Fr. Joseph Shanahan. Shanahan, an Irishman, and thus acceptable to the English administration, Ireland being still part of their Empire. Soon a Catholic mission was founded at Calabar itself. This gave Ekeng an opportunity to study Catholic doctrine which he hastened to do the moment a friend loaned him a book which spelled out the tenets of the newly arrived missionaries.

What he discovered seemed to be all that he was searching for, especially the doctrine of the Eucharist. Finally, convinced of the truth of Catholicism, Ekeng made his decision. At 37 years of age he was received into the Catholic Church, taking the name Michael in Confirmation.

DIRECTOR OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL...

We have now reached 1925. Ekeng at this stage had become a Headmaster at the Scottish mission and he had a guaranteed salary. The Catholic mission had a great need of teachers but could only pay them according to the small amounts contributed by the pupils week by week. But Ekeng did not hesitate... He soon became one of the most trusted school masters at the Catholic Mission. And besides his official duties, he also taught catechism. He was noted too for his great respect for the missionary

priests and Sisters. He was gifted musically, played the organ and soon developed a taste for the Gregorian liturgy being promoted by Pope Pius X. Inevitably, it was suggested to him that he might consider the priesthood. He thought about this for a while and then rejected it, not considering himself worthy of such a dignity. Shortly afterwards, he and several others were given responsibility for training teachers for the new schools and catechetical centres of the Calabar Mission. By 1930, there were more than 200 such centres.

In this year of 1930, a group of priests, a nucleus in what was to become the Missionary Society of St. Patrick, often known as the Kiltegan Fathers, arrived at Calabar. One of them, Fr. James Moynagh, was made Parish Priest of Anua, a parish slightly larger than the present diocese of Ikot Ekpene.



Fr. James Moynagh

This was the time of the Wall Street crash whose repercussions were worldwide and Fr. Moynagh soon found himself without means to keep his schools functioning. He consulted Michael Ekeng. The teachers were convened. All declared themselves willing to continue teaching on the sole condition that the villagers would give them enough to feed and clothe themselves and their families.

THE LEGION OF MARY AT WORK ON THE MISSIONFIELD

Apart from the villages which had schools, the great majority of villages were without any Christian presence and a majority of the population remained unevangelised. This huge problem worried Fr. Moynagh...who decided to entrust it to Our Lady. Shortly afterwards Fr. Peadar Boylan was assigned to him as Curate. Fr. Boylan's sister back in Ireland was a member of the Legion of Mary, an apostolic movement founded in 1921 by Frank Duff in Dublin.

Fr. Boylan recommended the Legion to his superior as a means of mobilising the Christians for the evangelisation of their brothers and sisters. Believing that he had received a reply from the Blessed Virgin, Fr. Moynagh gathered the teacher-catechists, Michael Ekeng among them, and he discussed the idea with them. The result was that on the 7th September 1933, the 12th anniversary of the foundation of the Legion in Ireland and in the world, the first

praesidium, or local group of the Legion in all of Africa was founded at Ifuho in the parish of Anua in Nigeria. On the proposal of Fr. Moynagh, Michael was unanimously appointed president.

Without delay the Legionaries began their work. The results were surprising and they were many: an immediate and ascending increase in the number of catechumens, then of baptisms, regularisations of marriage, conversions. Two by two the members visited and evangelised the outlying villages, teaching the Rosary, nurturing the apostolic interest of the new Christians. An available hut or one constructed in haste, served as Chapel and catechetical centre. Groups of auxiliary members were formed who would gather daily to say the Rosary and Legion prayers. Some of these would in time become active members, forming new praesidia to go out and evangelise other villages.



Michael Ekeng, former slave-boy, was chosen by Divine Providence to be the first legionary in Africa. The first praesidium was founded on September 7, 1933.

Fr. Moynagh and Ekeng worked hard to build up and extend the Legion. Bishop McGetterick, of Ogoja, wrote about Ekeng: "Michael Ekeng's capacity for work is amazing. I have known him to start from Calabar at 1:00 a. m. travel by canoe to Oron, a distance of eighteen miles, go from there to a Legion meeting fifty-five miles away, and, after the meeting, cycle another twelve miles to the nearest mission to receive Holy Communion. He fasted during the whole journey."

But never does he attribute the fruits of his apostolic labours nor the remarkable extension of the Legion to himself. He writes to recommend that his former parish Priest, now Monsignor Moynagh, should be nominated a Laureate Member of the Legion.... and this is done. But one Missionary disagreed: "It's Ekeng who should receive the laurel before anyone else, because of his ardent zeal and his untiring activity in the interests of the Legion, of its members and of its Queen. I must admit that the little I have done for the Legion is due to the inspiration of his remarkable commitment"

Gold is purified in the fire. Not everybody appreciated Michael's work and zeal. There were missionary men and women who would not tolerate him in their area. In 1949, an Envoy from the Concilium in Dublin arrived. He held consultations and then decided that Michael Ekeng should be replaced as head of the Comitium even in mid-term. Michael accepted this decision without seeking to defend himself and neither by word or by letter did he make any complaint. How did he reach such a high level of abnegation? There is a clue in an earlier letter of his: "We will go on in our little way as children in the faith, happy to follow the path of holy Christian childhood shown us by St. Therese".

A GREAT PILGRIMAGE

1950 comes. It is proclaimed a Holy

Year. His Bishop offers Ekeng a place on the diocesan pilgrimage to Rome. Learning of the proposal, Dublin hastens to invite him to continue his journey as far as headquarters of the Legion. But sickness prevents him from departing with the pilgrims who are travelling by boat. However, the Mission personnel are not put off. He joins the pilgrims in Rome having been given an air ticket. He whose regular mode of transport was a bicycle is carried on eagles' wings to the Eternal City. He joins his great Legion friend Dominic Ekandem, now a priest and a future Cardinal. After the Eternal City they continue their journey together. They pass through France, visiting Lourdes and Lisieux. In Dublin, Frank Duff the founder of the Legion, welcomes them with open arms. Jack Nagle, his Dublin correspondent, is delighted to meet him. He confides: "Ekeng is friendly, intelligent, and very widely read. He has a perfect knowledge of the Legion system. He has very little to learn from us". On the insistence of Frank Duff however, his visit is extended to six months. Frank also insists that he receive hospital treatment for some minor ailments. On the return journey, as their ship ploughs through the Bay of Biscay, he plays a game of chess with Fr. Fitzgibbon, future Bishop of Warri, with such zest that, on scoring a decisive stroke against his reverend opponent, he jumps up, upsetting the chessboard and denying himself the

ultimate victory. "He was genuine, a man completely absorbed in the supernatural" was the Bishop's later comment. On touching the coast of Africa, at every port Michael makes contact with the Legion, giving advice and encouragement. On his return to Anua, he is elected Vice-President of the Comitium which consoles him very much.

END OF AN APOSTOLIC LIFE

Soon however his health began to decline until his energy could no longer match his zeal. No more can he visit the praesidia which now number 150 and soon he has to give up any thought of official responsibility. "I want to do so much, but my strength is failing" he said. In December 1952 he had a complete collapse with indications of the onset of Alzheimer's or kindred disease. He retired to Calabar where he passed his last days with members of his rediscovered family. He died on the 2nd March 1958 and was honoured with a solemn funeral, the local school children fittingly providing a guard of honour for the distinguished Headmaster of former days. Frank Duff rendered homage to this "diamond, rough-hewn and polished by a Christian life faithfully lived, which today adorns the crown of the Queen of Heaven". Mgr. Daniel Dolan, former Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Calabar, a legionary spiritual director who knew Michael well and also kept in touch with him in his declining years, stated his belief that Michael had never committed a

serious fault from the day he became a Catholic to the day he died.

By his total self-giving, Michael Ekeng in his own sphere lived the "totus tuus" taught by St. Louis Marie de Montfort. He has to be reckoned among the great ones of the Legion of Mary. And what a delicate choice of Heaven to choose a slave-boy to be the foundation stone and line leader of the Legion of Mary in Africa which to-day numbers more than a million active members. But more even than that. In 1937, Monsignor Riberi, Apostolic Delegate to Missionary Africa, visited the Missions in the Calabar Diocese to observe, inter alia, the work of the Legion of Mary. On the basis of what he saw, he wrote a letter to the Ordinaries of Missionary Africa recommending the Legion of Mary as a choice instrument of evangelisation. Ten years later, writing from China he told Frank Duff that his recommendation of the Legion to the Ordinaries of Missionary Africa was based on the splendid work of Michael Ekeng and now in China he continued to speak about Michael Ekeng. The saga of the Legion in China with its heroic martyrs is a glorious page in the history of the Church. And yet, in the designs of God, all that achievement in Africa and in China could not have been conceivable without the solid example and achievements of that former slave-boy, Michael Stephen Ekeng.

Enda Dunleavy

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY 2003





Praises of Mary

After the love which we owe Jesus Christ, we must give the chief place in our heart to the love of His Mother Mary.

St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

Blessed are we if we are faithful in reciting that very popular and splendid prayer, the Rosary, which is a kind of measured spelling out of our feelings of affection in the invocation: Hail Mary. Our life will be a fortunate one if it is interwoven with this garland of roses, with this circlet of praise to Mary, to the mysteries of her Divine Son!

Pope Paul VI

Always stay close to this Heavenly Mother, because she is the sea to be crossed to reach the shores of Eternal Splendour.

Saint Pio

What a joy to remember that Mary is our Mother! Since she loves us and knows our weakness, what have we to fear?

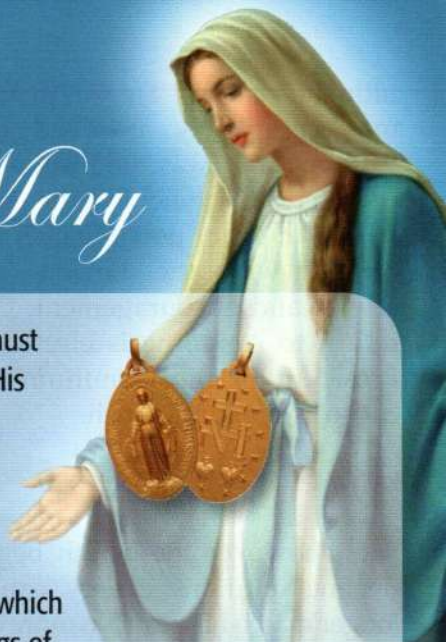
Saint Therese of Lisieux

Even while living in this world, the heart of Mary was so filled with tenderness and compassion for men, that no one ever suffered so much for his own pains as Mary suffered for the pains of others.

Saint Jerome

I am not only the Queen of Heaven, but also the Mother of Mercy.

Our Lady to Saint Faustina



FRANK DUFF CEREMONY

5 June 2016



by Síle Ní Chochlaín, President of Concilium

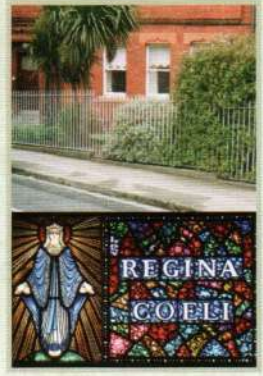
One hundred and twenty seven years ago on 7th June Frank Duff was born. Little did those who lived with him or grow up with him know how God and Our Lady were going to use him as their instruments.

He himself said his upbringing wasn't anything special in that there were no extra devotions other than what the basics of the Church asked. He went about life much as any young man of his time did. And then he received an invitation to join the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Soon after came a pivotal turning point which was to be the seed from which the Legion of Mary was to grow. That seed, or that holy inspiration, was the prompting given to him about the spiritual famine he was seeing among the poor he was visiting. That propelled him to make extra visits to those same people but this time offering only the spiritual.

In time – 1921 – he with the original group of women and Fr. Michael Creedon started what was to become the Legion of Mary. Wonderful graces flowed – hospital visitation to the abandoned cancer wards of the South Dublin Union, entry to Bentley Place until its eventual closure, the setting up of Sancta Maria Hostel later followed by the Morning Star Hostel and then the Regina Coeli Hostel. All heroic works. And in the Legion of Mary itself the members were introduced to the rich doctrines of the Mystical Body of Christ – built into the 3rd Standing Instruction and an understanding of the role of Our

Lady in the entire plan of salvation – which are as valuable to us today as they were in those early years of the Legion. Frank Duff also knew the vital ingredients of the Blessed Eucharist, frequent reception of the other Sacraments and inclusion in the prayer life of the Church. The Columban and later the Legion Breviary were offered to members leading on to the full Breviary of the Church where possible. He advocated the importance of the prayers of the Auxiliary and Adjectorian members without which the Legion could only poorly operate.





Over the years different tools of evangelisation emerged – Peregrinatio Pro Christo: offering the faith to those in distant places, Exploratio Dominicalis: offering the faith in nearby places; Maria et Patria and later Deus et Patria: a means of outreach to the younger generation.

In the 1940s Frank Duff drew up a detailed memorandum for Government which was later incorporated into the Legion as True Devotion to the Nation. There is a section in the Handbook but its rich contents are often lightly passed over without giving it greater consideration.

In the original memorandum Frank Duff pointed out the weaknesses of the Nation at that time and said there was need to have sound Christian ideals, raise standards, aim at excellence, really care about the good of the Nation.

He points out that the contribution of each individual is not only desirable but necessary, that people's talents should be developed, that there should be equality and no exploitation, that there

should be no waste, that idleness should not be rewarded, that the mentality of Government handouts was flawed because it didn't first explore other avenues of ingenuity to solve problems. We can recognise the value of each of these points as being applicable today.

Putting the Legion into the equation – conferences were organised for the Whit Weekend. in 1958 the theme was True Devotion to the Nation and in 1973 Making Ireland Holy which included in both cases talks given by Frank Duff on the topics of True Devotion to the Nation and The Faith: the Nation, respectively.





Frank Duff loved his country and wished the best for all its citizens. He saw the great value of bringing Our Lady into the equation and asking her to bring each person closer to her Son. He wanted legionaries to speak and behave, as we would imagine Our Lady would have done, with kindness

and gentleness but with firmness because we are doing all that we do for her Son.

His idea was to make use of all the gifts and talents of people and draw out those talents where they are initially hidden. He saw the value of teaching and sharing because he knew that the Nation could only be as good as its individual citizens.

On an old battered sheet found among his papers he had listed down worthwhile subjects for people to discuss and consider:

*Astronomy, Fishing, Bird Life, Ancient Monuments,
History of the Parish, History of local saints,
Aeroplanes, Aspects of Irish history, Architecture,
Wonders of the World, How it is made,
Music and drama (An Réalt),
Propogation of the Faith*

He valued contact with writers, critics and artists of the day and the Legion did for a time organise meetings for them with I am sure interesting exchanges of ideas! He commissioned silversmiths to make the beautiful sanctuary lamps to be found in the oratories of the Morning Star and the Regina Coeli Hostels (only the best was fit for the Lord), and artists painted beautiful representations for the covers of his books.

The Legion undertook the revitalisation of a barren situation in Tuosist, Co. Kerry, the result of emigration. People were encouraged to tidy up the area, make their premises more inviting for visitors, the B&Bs were advertised and over a period of time it became a very busy and inviting place for visitors to come. The spirit of the community was raised and several of the emigrants returned to their homes and took part in the new venture.

We know only too well that there are housing estates in various parts of Ireland which could be equated to what happened in Tuosist. Many people are living quiet lives of desperation either because of the drink or drug related problems, because of poverty, because of youngsters who taunt or vandalise older people living alone often out of sheer boredom. Surely the legionaries of 2016 could be as enterprising as those legionaries of the 1950s and help uplift an area so that the people could be proud to live there.

It would involve leadership to pull the enterprise together by including the people themselves, teachers, health care workers, clergy, business men etc. to make that a place of beauty and joy. Everyone would be influenced for the good and it would surely be a new avenue for active members. We see the generosity of the Irish in giving to world crises when they are called upon to help, we also see it where groups of volunteers go to areas of South Africa to build houses for the poor. Something given voluntarily brings with it a grace and satisfaction that cannot be found when the job is done for payment. And I believe that generosity of spirit still exists among the Irish people as a whole.

A great friend of Frank Duff's Fr. Herman Nolan C.P. wrote this poem in 1962 (and while he speaks of men its sentiments are equally applicable to women) and with it I finish because I think it has resonances for 2016:

*We could be doing with saints again
With holy consecrated men
And altogether honest men
To take the lonely lead*

*We have too many middling men
Who will not start to climb again
Too many cool complacent men
And bloodless inoffensive men
Self-made : self paralysed*

*We could be doing with poets again
With fiery men and fervent men
To pierce the heart with flaming pen
To see as seers deeply see
The fringes of the mystery*

*We have too many clever men
And cunning complicated men
And cynics of the snarling pen
Who spend their wits describing dirt
Instead of praising God.*



EUROPE

AUSTRIA: The Year of Mercy and the 300th Anniversary of the death of St. Louis Marie de Montfort were promoted at Winter and Summer Schools, organised by the Senatus, which organised also a Day School on the Apostolate to Muslims, a Spiritual Directors' Conference and a Winter School for young legionaries. The Korean Curia reported nine adults received Baptism. The **Zwettl Comitium** held two Retreats for youth; a former member of the Comitium was ordained to the priesthood. Reports from other Councils showed a Congress organised on Mary, Mother of Mercy; a Retreat for the lapsed; and wide distribution of Frank Duff prayer leaflets.

BELARUS: Works include preparing parishioners for Confession, visitation of homes, hospitals and an Orphan Asylum, census of Catholics, speaking with young people in parks and evangelising at Railway Stations. Two legionaries from Minsk went to Grodno to do recruiting. Two Parish Priests in Minsk have requested the establishment of the Legion.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: A regular apostolate is carried out to a Home for children who are without parental care

by legionaries in Sarajevo Curia. Hospitals and care homes are also visited. The legionaries also help the blind to go to Mass on Sundays.

BULGARIA: The young adults' praesidium in Sofia does street contact and gives religious instruction to children. The Senatus of Austria visited the praesidia in Bulgaria and officers of the Bulgarian presidia attended a meeting of the Senatus in Vienna.

CROATIA: Reports to **Zagreb Regia** show many returns to the sacraments. New presidia were set up in **Zedong Comitium** and **Pedrina Curia**. **Osijek Comitium** organised a presentation of the Legion in a parish in Ruma, in the Republic of Serbia.

CZECH REPUBLIC: **Prague Comitium** set up three new presidia. Their Spiritual Director, Bishop Karel Herbst, helped with the new praesidium in Kamenne Zehrovice. The Olmutz Comitium's Spiritual Director, Fr. Dobes, contacted his fellow priests regarding Frank Duff's Cause and many churches now have Frank Duff prayer leaflets. Reports from Councils show that as a result of visitation of the sick, 237 persons were anointed.



HUNGARY: All Councils attached to **Budapest Regia** reported on visits to the sick and elderly and helping them to receive the Sacraments. A Curia in Kistausa leads a youth club and **Pecs Curia** taught children in crèches and in primary schools how to pray. Legionaries in **Ujpest Curia** help disabled people, alcoholics and drug addicts and assist in religious classes for children.

LATVIA: A praesidium in **Riga Comitium** does street contact and home to home visitation. A junior praesidium visits the nursing home and shops for the residents. They promote the Miraculous Medal at schools and do contact work during lunch breaks. The praesidium in Aglona, seat of the national shrine to Our Blessed Lady organise Night Adoration at the shrine once a month.

LITHUANIA: Reports from Curiae attached to **Kaunas Comitium** show four new praesidia were set up by a Curia in Siauliai Diocese. A Curia in Vilnius Archdiocese set up a new praesidium. Many met in a Day Centre have no religion, or are lapsed for years. Legionaries promote the Miraculous Medal and attendance at Mass. A praesidium in Vilnius visits disabled people and those living alone. In **Telsiai Comitium** the legionaries helped 176 people prepare for Confession. A praesidium organises children's adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

MOLDOVA: Over 100 legionaries from eight praesidia attended the Acies of **Chisinau Curia**. Legionaries visit the

lapsed, the poor and the sick, and also hold Patricians meetings. Homes of drug addicts and alcoholics were also visited.

POLAND: A major event in **Lublin Regia** was the Commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the death of St. Louis Marie de Montfort, which coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Legion in Lublin. The event was held in the Catholic University of Lublin. There were 10 sessions with notable speakers. Fruits of the legionary apostolate include: six couples had their marriages regularised, seven children baptised; four people confirmed; ten children made 1st Holy Communion and 120 people received the Sacrament of Penance. Legionaries in **Praga Comitium** (Warsaw) do a lot visitation, caring for the sick in their homes and in nursing homes.

ROMANIA: Works undertaken by legionaries in **Satu Mare Regia** include hospital visitation, organising Eucharistic Adoration and leading the Rosary in the Church, plus many works of service and Parish activities. In **Oradea Comitium** legionaries regularly visit four orphanages, organise Eucharistic Adoration and help with the work of Radio Maria. Legionaries are accompanied by the priests on some of their activities. The **Sakor Curia** promoted the eight weeks of prayer for the Unity of Christians.

SLOVAKIA: In **Zseliz Comitium** one praesidium uses five Pilgrim Statues on family visitation and their youth praesidium started an adult praesidium

in Csistar. Hungarian and Slovakian-speaking legionaries worked together in Leirce. Trnava Curia reported a 55 year old Downs Syndrome man made his First Holy Communion. 200 attended their annual Pilgrimage.

SLOVENIA: A meeting was held with the Archbishop of Ljubljana to discuss extension of the Legion in Slovenia. Four Slovenian legionaries aided by four from Croatia and two from Austria presented the Legion in the town of Grosuplje.

UKRAINE: A student African Curia was set up on 7th March 2015. Officers of Kiev Curia met with Archbishop Petro. The Austrian correspondent for Kiev spent seven weeks visiting Councils. Elizabeth Kriss and other Austrian legionaries have spent time in Ukraine also. Mass was celebrated to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Legion in Kremenets Podolski. Local legionaries joined the Austrian Peregrinatio Pro Christo to Lemberg. The first Retreat was held in Nikolaew. An elderly person was baptised through the Greek Catholic praesidium. Follow up was done on the Greek Catholic Tessera and the Ukrainian Handbook.

ASIA

INDONESIA: In Jakarta **Senatus** legionaries undertake visitation of the sick and dying; promotion of the Legion among young people, and evangelising in the Mentawai Islands. Study of the Catechism was urged by the Spiritual Director to help with instruction and better knowledge of the

faith. The legionary apostolate in **Malang Senatus** includes, among other works, home visitation, visitation of the sick in hospitals and in their homes, distribution of Holy Communion, apostolate to prisoners and a Centre for Drug Addicts, and helping victims of HIV Aids, drugs, and human trafficking. Thirteen people were baptised. Exploratio Dominicalis has been undertaken. In Merauke a junior praesidium promotes prayer and devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

JAPAN: Archbishop Manyo Maeda and over 100 legionaries, including auxiliary members attended the Acies of **Osaka Senatus**. Ecumenical prayer meetings are held by a praesidium in the **Senatus** as part of a nationwide venture, with 30 attending. Two new catechumens were gained in the past year. Mass for the sick is appreciated, people saying, "We are not forgotten" "After a long time I have come back to Church" and "I was happy to meet the priest face to face." Great grief was expressed at the death of praesidium Spiritual Director, Fr. Joldy, R.I.P.

KOREA: Five Regiae in **Seoul Senatus** have a total of 51,071 active members, 6,217 Praetorians and 12,682 juniors. 12,682 Baptisms and 15,248 returns to the Sacraments were recorded. **Suwon Regia** has 78 young adult praesidia. Two senior praesidia in a bank helped six people to be baptised. A lady contacted in a hospital asked for Baptism; two of her sisters and a brother were also baptised and through



the initial contact with this lady, whose husband is in the army, 31 soldiers also later received Baptism. Three Regiae at Busan, Jeon-ju, and Masan, attached to **Gwangju Senatus**, recorded totals of 7,495 Baptisms and 11,335 returns to the Sacraments. **Daegu Senatus**: Fifty new members were recruited in a newly-established parish which now has a Curia consisting of four praesidia. A Youth Retreat had 118 in attendance. A Retreat for formation in Legion Spirituality was conducted in Uksoo parish, followed by a Mass of appreciation for a praesidium which had held its 1,000th weekly meeting. 200 junior legionaries from **Gyongsan Comitium** took part in a one-day Retreat.

MALAYSIA: Reports to **Kuala Lumpur Regia** show legionaries engaged in visitation of homes and nursing homes, the sick and elderly, hospitals, a HIV Aids Shelter, a prison, an orphanage and a leprosarium. They also take part in an outreach to homeless people on the streets.

SINGAPORE: **Singapore Senatus** is aiming to hold a Frank Duff Day on the anniversary of his death, 7 November. Two new junior praesidia were established and the setting up of a new junior Curia was discussed. A post-graduation praesidium was also established.

NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO: Reports to the **Merida Senatus** show that the Comitium in Cancún, which is in a tourist area, is

very active. 25,000 homes were visited. Among those visited were 4,000 members of the different sects. Ten adults were prepared for Baptism. A young man with AIDS was baptised and received the Sacrament of the Sick. He asked to have his daughter baptised before he died. His family are now Church goers. In **Mexico City Senatus** a Curia reported organising Holy Hours in homes at the behest of the Parish Priest and with the help of Eucharistic Ministers. In Perote, the **Puebla Regia** area, five praesidia were set up recently. Street Rosaries are organised; five families are selected to mount a little altar outside their home and a Mystery of the Rosary is recited at each altar as legionaries and parishioners process along the street. A Congress entitled "The Legionary and the Eucharist" was held recently in **Hermosillo Regia** with a big attendance. In **Monterrey Regia** the attached Comitium of Saltillo organised Masses and Prayer Groups in areas of high vandalism. A very successful Retreat was organised in an area where practice of the faith is poor. One praesidium organises prayers and Masses for bereaved families, resulting in many of them returning to the practice of the faith. Small groups have been organised by one Curia to study De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary.

U.S.A.: Legionary works in **Boston Senatus** included Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in 12 homes and two nursing homes. A Curia arranges Confession for the seriously ill. In **Providence Comitium**, RI, conversion works brought about Baptism and First Communion of four children with

parents returning to practice. The highlight of the May Gathering in **Chicago Senatus** in 2015 was the presence of Fr. Bede McGregor, O.P., Concilium Spiritual Director, and Fr. Liam O'Cuiv, Spiritual Director, **Veneranda Curia**, Dublin, who were representing the Concilium at the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Senatus. Over 100 legionaries came from five States, many travelling great distances, to be present at the weekend Conference and Senatus meeting. **St. Paul Comitium**, MN, has a praesidium working with young adults, teaching CCD and they plan a junior praesidium. **Our Lady of the Angels Curia** has 16 praesidia, one of which conducts a junior praesidium. Evangelising is done through Catholic radio, with young sports personalities, witnessing for their faith. A new Hispanic Comitium was set up. Bishop Paul Sirba requested **Duluth Curia**, MN, to continue their prison ministry on behalf of his Diocese.

In the **Cincinnati Senatus** area teaching catechism and door to door evangelisation feature in **Detroit Regia** reports. The Regia organised a Rosary rally which had a talk on De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary. **Dayton Curia**, Ohio, host Legion booths at fairs and did a four-day street apostolate in Cincinnati. 62 Legionaries participated in a Peregrinatio Pro Christo to Munchie, Indiana. **East Cleveland Curia** visit nursing homes, jails, and housebound. **Houston Senatus** officers attended the Episcopal Ordination ceremony of the new Bishop of Victoria, TX, Bishop Brendan

Cahill, former Spiritual Director of **Houston Senatus**. Many praesidia in the Senatus area have more than one Pilgrim Statue in use, which are having positive results, uniting families. Prisoners are visited and prayed with and religious literature shared. One adult and two youths were converted. Many pastors are looking for praesidia in Louisiana due to parish missions on True Devotion to Mary given by Deacon Millar. A long-time legionary has entered a Seminary. In **Los Angeles Senatus** legionaries engage in home and hospital visitation, Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes, catechesis, Pilgrim statue visitation, book barrow and crowd contact and prison visits. The Senatus has a Junior Curia with seven praesidia. A Chinese praesidium has nine members and 115 auxiliaries. A Council attached to the Senatus had six praesidia undertaking Exploratio Dominicalis. **Tijuana Curia** has a young adult praesidium and has gained seven new praesidia in the past year.

Reports to **New York Senatus** show **Staten Island Curia** has 13 praesidia with 100 active and 353 auxiliary legionaries attached. Two weekend Exploratio Dominicalis projects were held on a local boardwalk. **Morris County Curia** gained three new praesidia. 455 contacts were made at a book barrow parish coffee morning location. A group of 25 legionaries from **New York Senatus** participated in a Peregrinatio Pro Christo to Alabama. Local legionaries also took part. Many Baptists met enjoyed the encounter, and expressed surprise to see Catholics



evangelising. In Philadelphia Senatus a book barrow outside a downtown Church was the Legion's Information Centre for contacts and greetings to the many visitors to the World Meeting of Families with Pope Francis. Archbishop Chaput was chief celebrant at a Mass on the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Legion in Philadelphia. In **Metuchen Comitium**, NJ, the **Hispanic Curia** had 19 adults baptised, 17 confirmed and four couples received the Sacrament of Matrimony. **Altoona-Johnstown Curia** organised three Marian Days; one had 550 attending. A praesidium in Andorra, PA, conducts a Frank Duff prayer group. **Harrisburg Comitium**, PA, held a successful Legion Congress last November with their Bishop Gainer present, along with 75 legionaries. The theme was, 'The Spirituality of Frank Duff'. This is the 3rd year of a praesidium's initiative of inviting passers-by to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday, with many good contacts.

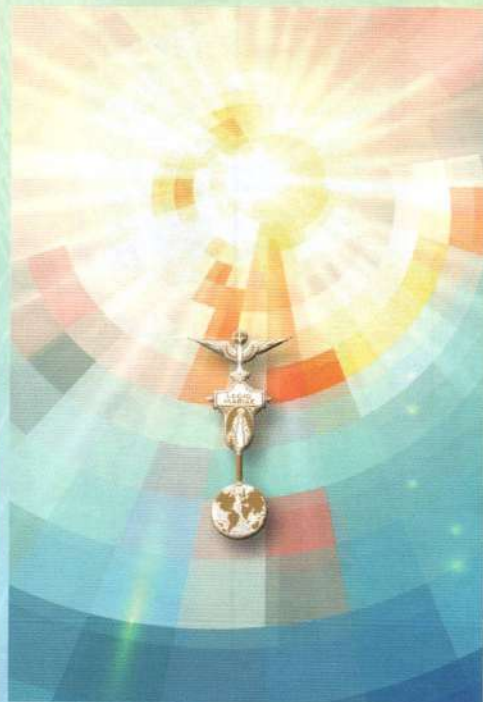
Reports to **San Francisco Senatus** show promoting Pilgrim Statue, Patricians, teaching catechism, apostolate to the crowd, door to door visits, visiting the sick and organising a Marian Pilgrimage, featured in the works of two praesidia with 11 and 6 members, respectively. **Seattle Comitium** held a Congress, started three new praesidia, a new Spanish Curia in Toppenish and a new Curia in Redmond, Oregon. Legionaries in **Anchorage Curia**, Alaska, teach Natural Family Planning, visit homeless and new parish members and assist with Baptism preparation. **San Mateo**

Comitium promotes True Devotion to Mary. **North West Korean Comitium**, with 5 attached Curiae, has a total of 472 active members. **St. Louis Senatus** recruited 20 new active members and they have a high number of auxiliaries. Works being undertaken include Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes, prison visits, and welcoming new parishioners. Known results include 33 lapsed returning to practice and two conversions to the faith. **Arlington Regia**, VA, held a Congress entitled "The Charism of Frank Duff". The Regia had a workshop on Liturgy of the Hours for Praetorian and Adjutorian members. **Arlington Junior Curia** has 85 members visiting nursing homes, making Rosary beads, visiting auxiliaries and recruiting members for the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart. **Fairfax Comitium** held a Retreat for 47 teenagers and made 997 contacts at a local fair. The Regia had a Peregrinatio Pro Christo to Cuba in July. Fr. Colm Mannion O.P. led their weekend Retreat and Bishop Paul S. Loverde celebrated their Frank Duff Mass. **Miami Regia** governs the Legion in five of the Southern States while caretaking the Legion in Jamaica and the Bahamas as well. Praesidia report membership of 10 to 15 active legionaries and 80-180 auxiliaries. The Legion in Alabama continues to grow. An extension worker, Sr. Amber Rose, assigned to introduce the Legion at the new Ave Maria School of Law at Naples, Florida, has now extended her efforts to the Florida Gulf Coast University at Fort Myers. The Spiritual Director of the Regia

since 1978 and one-time Concilium's Envoy to Mexico, Fr. Soulliere, has become 'Spiritual Director Emeritus'.

CANADA: In **Montreal Senatus** 3000 Frank Duff prayer cards were printed for distributing to parishioners. Two African praesidia report eight and 15 active members respectively, including nine probationers. A new praesidium in Quebec evangelises youth and has monthly recitation of the Rosary at a Nursing home. The English-speaking Curia reports on works of Faith consolidation and organises pilgrimages to local shrines. **Toronto Senatus:** A praesidium has begun in St. Augustine's Seminary. The Senatus Spiritual Director, who helped to get the praesidium started, states that: "The seminarians are all very surprised at the depth of sound doctrine and theology contained in the Handbook and the nature and dignity of the lay apostolate." Two Adjutorians, attached to a junior praesidium, were raised to the Diaconate recently. A Retreat for the lapsed and non-Catholics had 19 participants. The **Ottawa Regia** had a two-day project in August, involving eight praesidia and 20 members in the city centre, sharing their Faith. **Newfoundland Curia** had a 6-week parish Retreat, based on the 33 Day preparation for True Devotion to Mary and **Winnipeg Curia**, Manitoba, organised parish Marian Retreats, lasting from 6 to 10 weeks on True Devotion to Mary. Legionaries in **Winnipeg Curia** do prison ministry in a Rehab Centre. A praesidium in **Edmonton Comitium** brings five Pilgrim Statues to 85 homes. Four

Patricians meetings had 28-40 attending. Bishop Paul Terrio of St. Paul Diocese, circulated his 26 parishes with information on the Legion of Mary. Home visitation, a Retreat for 20 juniors, a request by a nursing home resident to set up a praesidium and bringing a priest to a dying man in hospital were reported. Reports to **Vancouver Comitium** show members made 75 contacts with prostitutes and drug addicts, distributing Rosary beads and Miraculous Medals. Legionaries engaged in street contact encountered 379 people. 292 other contacts were made at the Sky Train, Bus Depot, bus stops and apartment hallways. A junior praesidium helps families with household duties and reciting the Rosary. Fr. Paul Goo, a former active legionary, was recently ordained to the Priesthood.



MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER



International Centre of the Legion of Mary
De Montfort House, Morning Star Avenue, Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, Ireland
Phone: (353-1) 872 3153 / 872 5093
Website: www.legionofmary.ie
Legion enquiries - e-mail: concilium@legion-of-mary.ie