

Maria Legionis



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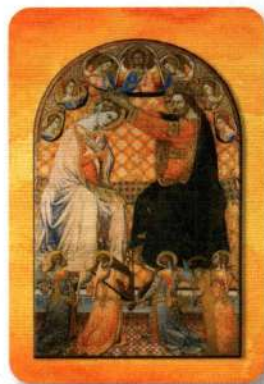
The Voice of the Legion of Mary

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Thy Children as Olive Plants - <i>Frank Duff</i>	3
Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, Ireland - <i>Address by Fr Paul Churchill</i>	17
Visit to Brazil - <i>Tadhg McMahon and Paddy Fay</i>	22
Praises of Mary	27
Maynooth University Praesidium	28
Knock Pilgrimage Bishop's Address	30
World News	34
Thanks to Edel	40



THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

Painting by Giacomo di Mino

We come now to the last, and perhaps the sweetest, of the mysteries: Our Lord Jesus, the King of Heaven, delights to bestow on Our Lady, the Queen Mother, her rightful crown. It shines like the stars, and she is clothed in a royal robe dazzling like the sun, with the pale loveliness of the moon under her feet. (see Rev 12:1)

When we ponder the Glorious Mysteries, then, we are meditating on mysteries of breath-taking beauty – and none more beautiful than the coronation of Our Lady. In the crowning of Mary, Mother of the Church, we see fulfilled the words of St. Paul, for we see Christ "present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing...holy and without blemish."



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“Behold thus shall the man be blessed
that Feareth the Lord” – Ps. 127

Thy Children as Olive Plants

by The Servant of God, Frank Duff



I am going to tell you something about children, and especially about your children. Rather daring! You will say to yourself. Your first thought will be: “Surely we already know about our own children?” No, that is not the case. Too often parents know very little about their own children, startling as that may sound to your ears. For very often in the first days of a child’s life false relationships are established between it and its parents – which are never afterwards rectified. It is easy for that to happen. The very helplessness of children in their early stages tends that way. They are so completely dependent on their mother; they are so much like little animals that there is the temptation to regard them as but superior little animals. Then that initial lag never catches up with the child’s developing. Parents treat their children as babies when no longer babies, and as children when they have become quite big boys and girls – always trying to catch up and never managing it.

That is what I mean by false relationships. The position all along is that parents do not adapt themselves

rapidly enough to the child’s progressiveness and at no time give the child credit for what is in it. The result is that parent and child do not know each other, and hence the child does not confide in its parents. There is no real understanding, no intimacy, so that in only too many cases the children have to leave the parental home and get married before they secure that understanding and intimacy. Surely this is stark tragedy. Because where should children get all that understanding and sympathy and knowledge – which is so necessary to them – but from their own parents who brought them into the world and saw their beginnings, and in whom nature has planted a most amazing love for those children? Yet, by reason of a false start, a process of drift, and an out-and-out lack of idealism, a state of affairs can be arrived at in which parents and children have surprisingly little to do with one another outside the mechanical side of existence. Mentally, that is to say in the important things of life, there is often very little association between parents and children.

Worse than that! – how delighted children often are to leave their parents' home! Worse still is the comparative indifference with which some people view the passing away of their parents. What greater sorrow than the loss of father or mother? Yet again and again I have seen that devastating event treated quite casually. That sad finale will not be yours; for you are a section of parenthood which is above the average, and whose children are of worthy mettle. But plenty of what I touch on will apply to you. Should you feel that it does, watch carefully your step. The wrong path ends dismally, and on that path it is almost impossible to retrace a step.

The Common Materialistic Outlook

What is the common outlook of parent on child? Virtually a materialistic one, wherein the worldly things are definitely put first. The dominant idea is to secure jobs for the children; or if these children are girls, to get them advantageously married. Surveying those parents, one would really think that they had not a higher thought about their children. And this applies even to good people, religious ones at that, but whose ideals in regard to their children are distressingly like those of a pagan. The bringing out of the talents and qualities of their children is only viewed from the angle of the material benefit which will accrue; not from the terrific point of view of developing a human being, and thereby a soul destined to live for ever according to the scale of that achievement.

Teach them this; teach them that. Why? Because it will help them to earn more money, or lead on to better matches. That is materialism though you may call it love. It is paganism, though you may array it in Christian dress. I am not contending that the child's future advancement and comfort should not receive consideration. Of course they should, but on no account should they constitute the chief objective. But ordinarily they do. How few are the parents who think above profit and the pleasant side of things for their children.

Preparing Children for Their Mission in Life

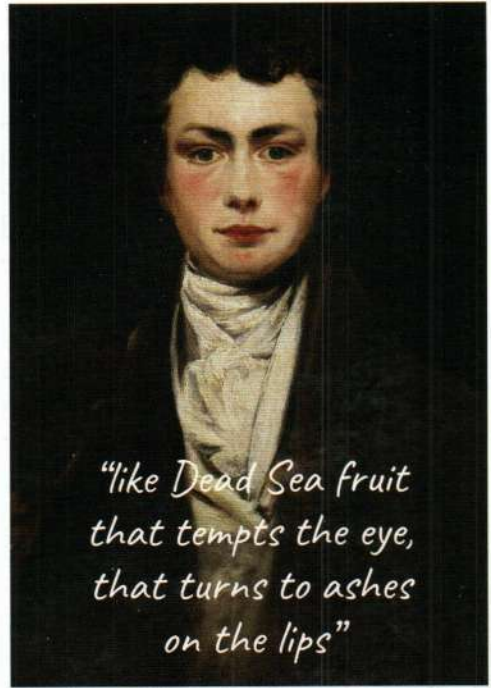
Come nearer home. Look into your own hearts, and ruthlessly analyse your ambition for your children. Is it of that common sort; or is it the uncommon one of a Mission in Life? What do I mean by a mission? I mean a trusteeship to the world, a duty to make other people better, to help the nation, to build something for the Church of God. Surely it is common sense that every Christian parent should think of its child in that responsible way? But such a mission does not mean making money. Sometimes it may mean that, but only accidentally; and mostly it will not be profitable in the worldly sense to have such a mission. Usually it will entail many crosses, toils and disappointments.

It may mean a mangled body. In some cases that child may have to lay down its life to save another's life. What about Father Damien who, in pursuit of his

particular mission in life, became a leper? What of the pioneers of the X-ray whose flesh rotted off their bones because they did not then know how to protect themselves against its searching influence? In such directions may a mission lead, but is it therefore to be recoiled from?

Frequently we find that the better the parents, the more anxious they are that their children should sip the sweet things of life. But if you want your children to fulfil the purpose for which God sends them on their momentous pilgrimage through this world, then that soft and selfish side must be subordinated. I do not suggest that it should be left out altogether. That would not be right, moreover, it would be beyond normal human nature. But at least it must be second to the spiritual consideration. You must set your heart and soul on your children having that mission in life, and to that end you must now be prepared to make the offering in your heart which they later on will have to make in their flesh.

It should be obvious that in directing your children towards high ideals there is a gain even for yourselves. It is in your own interest that you bring out in them all that is good. For if you teach your children selfishness and give them the idea that they must get on in the world at any price, you yourselves will be the prime victims in their cold and calculating path. They may have that petty career on which you set your heart. But beware lest "like Dead Sea fruit that tempts the eye, that turns to ashes on the lips" – as Tom Moore sings.



The Legion of Mary and Children

So from every point of view it is essential that the developing of your children be proportionate to their spiritual destiny. To that end must you lavish love and care on them, and draw out every quality and charm which may be in them. The Legion of Mary aspires to help you in that work. Its programme and yours are, or should be, identical.

It aims to expand the characters of its members, among whom are your children, and in this and every other way enable them to achieve their Christian destiny. Therefore, the Legion and yourselves must pull together as a team. My present purpose is to make that plain to you and to get you to put on the harness.

I start by saying that the Legion, or any Society like it, is no spiritual luxury. There are more people than one would like to number who think that all that is expected of the Christian is that he go to Mass on Sundays and to the Sacraments now and then; and accordingly that the Legion is mere idealism in the sense that it is to be admired but is not necessary. That is a mistake which deserves to be called a catastrophe. In solid fact, a Society such as the Legion of Mary is essential. It forms part of what one might call the



sheer bread and butter of the Christian life. And why - because that Christian life requires apostleship from every person.

When one is made a Christian by baptism, he is in that very act summoned to the apostolate, so that if he does not respond he will be living only half the circle of the Christian life. Throughout his whole reign, Pope Pius XI was denunciatory of the half-circle Christian. Apostleship, he insisted, is part and parcel of the Christian life. But he also emphasised another vital principle, namely that the wish to be apostolic, deprived of the practical means thereto, will in most circumstances remain sterile. Therefore a Society like the Legion which almost automatically enables people to discharge that duty, is not a luxury but a paramount necessity.

Preparing Children for Apostolate

Many may freely admit all that. But they argue that its place is later on, when the children have got themselves settled in life; for the present they must devote all their time to the preparing of themselves for the getting of that job. This sounds so plausible. But what does it imply? What else but that the apostolate is a mere trimming - something that can be left over to some future time when people have leisure for the non-essentials. What does this mean but that incorrect religious standards are being set before your children in their impressionable years? Worse, that you are indelibly fixing those standards in their minds. You know what is said of the years of childhood - that they are wax to receive, marble to retain. This is only another way of putting what I said a while ago; that you cannot retrace the steps which day by day you take in respect of your children. Therefore it is imperative that adequate ideals be placed before children in their early years when they are easily moved and taught. They should then be shown, by word and by deed, the full circle of Christian duty and thus apprenticed to the service of the Church.



Rules of the Legion

Now for these Legionary rules. They are not complex. First, there is a weekly meeting held around a little altar like that one which faces you this evening. The members say the prayers which we have said this evening; then they discuss the work which they are doing.



The second duty is that every day the members recite the singularly effective form of prayer called the Catena, consisting mainly of the Magnificat. The third requirement is the doing weekly of some apostolic work. This varies according to the branches and places, but it must represent some definite task allocated to the member. It is to be performed by that member during the week and reported upon at the next meeting.

Those are the primary rules. But rules empty of spirit are – well, let us be content with saying “ineffective”. It is the spirit that matters. What is the spirit of the Legion? “It is this: The legionary must in everyone see Our dear Lord, and must in every duty serve Him. Then there is the further essential note that everything must be done in closest union with our Blessed Lady; so that in all that the Legionary does he tries to show forth the mothering of Jesus by Mary.

Believing the above things, the Legion makes incessant approach to schools and colleges with the plea that they start Praesidia among their students. Usually these excuse themselves on the score of their exacting time-tables. Sometimes they say that they would be wishful to make room for the Legion, but that the parents would one and all object to any diverting, however slight, of the children from that grim pursuit of the JOB. So between them – schools and parents – the responsibility lies. Well, here is what Pius XI has said to those schools – and through them to those parents:

“Religious of both sexes will render a signal service to Catholic Action by preparing for it from a tender age the boys and girls under their charge in schools and colleges. At first, the young people are to be sweetly attracted to an interest in the work of the apostolate, and then by constant and painstaking effort induced to become members of Catholic Action organisations. Where the latter do not already exist, those Religious should themselves establish them.



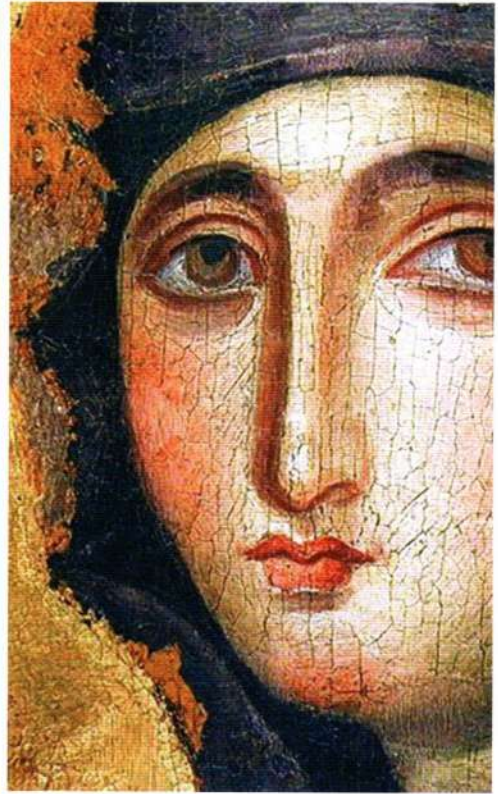
Those words are strong enough. It is hard to push them on one side. Yet it will be done. It will be alleged that the local circumstances are “special”. Superiors are constantly making this mistake of emancipating themselves from general Papal injunctions by declaring them to be inapplicable to “these children,” “this school,” “this town”.

THY CHILDREN AS OLIVE PLANTS

The foregoing does not represent mere imagery – picturesque and stimulating, but unreal. No, it is more real – nothing else than the detailed practice of the twin doctrines of the Mystical Body and of Our Lady’s Mediation of all Graces. Briefly, the idea of the Mystical Body is that in every baptised person, and to a lesser extent in the un-baptised, Our Lord is living a life of His own; so that what we do to that person either for better or for worse, we do to Our Lord; and on these terms we are held accountable for every act we do throughout the day and on through life.

Ponder that doctrine. In other people and in every human occupation you face Our Lord and deal with Him! And He with you. And so you will be judged. Moreover, as Mary is the Mediatrix of all Graces, it follows that no act in life is done without her help – a help which the Legionary must acknowledge in his thoughts and acts with such constancy that this idea of the Motherhood of Mary becomes second nature to him.

Those holy realities form the Legionary spirit. Week in, week out, by word and work, they are drilled into its members so that these cannot be so dense or so forgetful as to escape in the end from an elementary understanding of those doctrines. You will realise what a profound effect this will exercise upon your children – upon all children in their receptive years. To the extent that this be achieved it will give them a new mentality. And if the mind is the man, then you have a new man, and granted enough new men, you have the possibility of building a new world.



The formal Legion duties occupy no more than a couple of hours per week, but the Legion insists that those hours are only for the purpose of teaching. They are a school-time wherein its members are taught a system of idealism, and whence they are to go forth and put that system into practice. If they confine that idealism to the Legionary time, the Legion would class them as its failures. Just as the fire does not exist for the grate which holds it, but for the whole room, so the purpose of those few Legionary hours is to heat all the other hours.

Now suppose the Legion is successful in lighting such a fire in your children’s hearts? Where will the warmth be radiated?

Here pardon me for talking in terms of A, B and C, but I must keep my ideas clear and yours too. A is school-time; B is play-time; C is home.

The Legion and School-Time

First A, the hours of school and study – so vital to the modern child that if he manages to evade the education offered to him, he will be a sort of cripple in later years. Children must learn; they must drink in knowledge. And they can only drink it in the measure that they approach it. If the approach to the process of education is dull, hostile, non-receptive, the child will not get much out of it, even in a whole lot of years. Considering the billions of words which have been spoken, and the really extensive and varied fields of knowledge which have been covered, it forms a mystery how so little of it sticks in the mind of a child. Recently some governmental investigations brought out the disconcerting fact that a big proportion of children can spend all those years at school and come out knowing nearly nothing. What is responsible for this shocking anti-climax? The sweat of toiling nations is being gathered up by way of taxation, and then, so to speak, poured profitlessly down the drain of education! And still more disastrous is the fact that human intelligence is lying fallow. The universal inclination is to blame the teachers for this partial failure. But I believe that we must blame the pupils – or rather say that there is something wrong with their approach to education. In general they do not desire to learn. They may go to school

willingly, but not for the purpose of learning. To this there can be but one end, namely that they assimilate only a minute fraction of the education which is tendered to them.

What has this got to do with the Legion and your children? This: that the young Legionary who has absorbed to some extent the Legionary ideal will necessarily see schools, teachers, books, rules and study in a different light, and will accordingly get things from school which the other child would not get. Therefore, even if the Legion did represent “time taken from study” (this is the conventional and parrot-life objection), the net effect would not be minus but plus, not loss but incomparable gain. It would in fact be the authentic case of the sprat which catches the salmon.

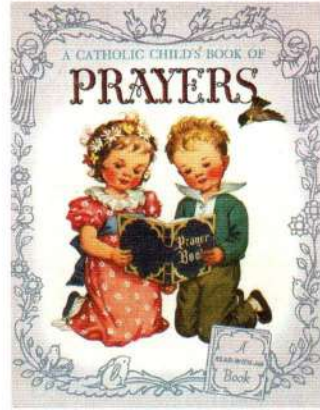
The Legion and Playtime

Playtime is the second consideration. It also is a time of moulding – as much as the school hours. It is the social life of the child, when it mixes with its own young world and there forms the vital friendships which last though life. It is a time when the child usually escapes from the supervision of elders, and there lies peril. The child of weaker nature may fall under influences which will prove too much for it. Nor is the child of stronger nature (which bespeaks strong passions) any the less in danger. Whether your child is in the class of being influenced or in that of doing the influencing, it is equally in need of proper motive-power. If this is absent, those children will drift along with every current and eddy – and to what?

Unquestionably the Legion can furnish that motive-power. It gives its young members an outlook on life and on people, a code of conduct, principles of action; and thereby it removes the young Legionary from the class of human driftwood. Moreover, it will ensure that the child, with masterful qualities will use these for good and not for evil as is so often the case.

The Legion and the Child at Home

The third consideration is in a way the most important for you – at least it touches you the most closely. It is the child at home. Insistently harped on by the Legion to its young members is their attitude towards their homes, their parents, brothers and sisters, and all the items of the home. It is impressed on them that the Legionary idea must shape their behaviour there – and if not, that the Legionary spirit is not in them, and apparent manifestations of it in other quarters are not the real article, but a mere veneer. In this programme the Legion has been fairly successful. A large proportion of parents and teachers have come to us reporting a changed demeanour in their children; an attitude of helpfulness towards those around them which was not there before. It is reasonable to suppose that a significant change must have taken place interiorly before an improvement in conduct will attract attention, and a radical change before it will form the subject of formal comment. Therefore, it may be claimed that already effects are being produced of the type which the Legion had reasoned would be forthcoming from its scheme.



And here I have to strike again the note already sounded. Those Junior Legionaries, having been taught to see Christ in their neighbour (who is everybody around them), then have it dinned into their ears that the very first quarter to receive the benefit of that ideal must be their own homes and their own people. There they should seek out tasks instead of avoiding them – aye and the unpleasant ones at that!

They must go out of their way to be obliging instead of merely giving in to begging and threatening. They must relieve their overburdened mothers. They must look in the Legionary way on the other children, assist in the management of the younger ones, but taking an interest in all, serving all. Is not all that a gain to you?

"Fine!" says the cynic, "but ..."

"But me no buts,"

retorts the Legion of Mary.

"It is practicable. It is being realised, and already on a scale sufficiently large to prove that it can be universally applied."

I think that all, even the best circumstanced, will admit that the entry of that spirit would transform all homes. Yet thus far we have been speaking only in terms of happiness, and there is much more to it than that. There is the higher element that the child is acting out of the love of God and with the express motive of serving God. According to the motive is the grace bestowed: no motive no grace; poor motive poor grace; pure motive big grace. And therefore the transformation of the home is but a faint reflection of the transformation simultaneously effected in that child's soul.

But our cynic may be excused for casting doubt on this picture. For certainly it does not photograph the ordinary household. How loud are the complaints of parents that their children are selfish, unamenable, disobliging, quarrelsome, dodging the common tasks of the home. How often from the child is heard that cry of woe, "You are always asking me. Why don't you ask Tommy?" The atmosphere is one of endless disputation, of forcing the children to do things which they should be eager to do out of natural love, and supernatural love; but which they don't do, and won't do. There are abusive words and tears; nerves on edge; and relations often become quite embittered between parents and children. Of course the parents place all the blame on the children; one would judge from their talk that they had brought monstrosities into the world. They forget that in their own young days they exhibited towards their parents that same spirit of which they now

complain. But let me assure you that in the normal case the fault originated in the parents and not in the child. If children are taken right from the beginning, they can be moulded very easily. You do not find too many children of ideal parents turning out badly.

Parents Must Prove Their Love

Parents express surprise that their children should be so misbehaved and so ungrateful. They exclaim, "We care for them in every way. We have always shown them what their duty is." Of course there is a fair percentage of truth in that. Innumerable sacrifices have been made for those children – there have to be nowadays in order to bring up a family. But surely you do not expect children to be grateful for being housed, clothed, fed, and sent to school? They take all that for granted. In after years they will look back through their tears and say, "My father and mother were very good. They put a vast amount of self-sacrifice into the rearing of our family." But they do not see that to-day. They have a different set of values. Their hearts are set on things which are very often – unreasonably, they imagine – denied to them. Love, for instance! "what!" those parents will say with shock. "We do love our children." And I am sure that all parents down almost to the very worst have love for their children. But in what manner is it being shown? Often-times in ways that the child does not recognise. That will not do. Your love must take forms which appeal to them and convince them that

they are tenderly loved and highly valued. Do I refer to sweets, toys, and the like? Not at all! Those things at best are only symbols, and at worst can mean nothing at all. I mean real proofs. I refer to basic things: sympathy, interest, and the flattering tribute of respect. Interest must be shown in the pursuits of children, in their idealism, their plans for the future. The child will not propound its theories and problems to anyone unless it feels it is on sure ground. If it fears a chill air or frosty remarks of the "Don't be a fool" order, it will not trot out its ideals and little schemes which seem at once to be so very bright and to be rather foolish. When a little person plots and plans in a big way, of course he or she is half-ashamed to air the product. Yet, there may be bigness there, which an improper attitude may bring to blight.

The Average Home

Are the general run of children being given those tangible evidences of love? No, I would definitely say. Parents have insufficient patience with them; do not treat them seriously; and too much fault-finding goes on. There are some mothers who make a non-stop performance of this latter. As those mothers see it, they are telling the children their duty. But for the child it is a harassing, odious and demoralising process. Repeatedly have I seen this chiding going on when there was no real fault, except that the children were children and acted as such. Watch some mothers – pushing, pulling, checking, scolding all the time. Thereby the children are goaded to chronic

fretfulness and disobedience, and their natures debased. Thereby they are perfectly taught the whole science of mismanagement of children, perverted home life, which they in due course (through knowing nothing better) will reproduce towards children of their own. Each one of you will know cases where that is the everyday routine; and perhaps you may not even be seeing the worst, because an appearance may be kept up to outsiders. Parents make favourites among their children; encourage rivalries; sometimes insanely egg on child against child, thus sowing the seeds of hate between them. Why, that is worse than the behaviour of the viler type of men who set one dog against another in the street for the fun of a fight!

Many parents go in for picking out their children's weak spots – and goodness knows there is no one who can pick them out better than the parents. They rake up those weak spots when a child is not giving satisfaction, harp on them, hold the child up to ridicule before the other children and before adults.

How will this end? Firstly, in the forfeiting of the child's love. Secondly, in the warping of the child's nature. Thirdly, in the creation of an inferiority complex which will handicap the child at every difficulty in its life. It will whisper to itself, "I am no good. I am clumsy. I am stupid." Initiative and effort are paralysed. How black this indictment looks in print. Sheer exaggeration, you may be inclined to think. Yes, exaggerated in the sense that not all of it would apply to every case.

And of course it is distorted in the sense that it omits the redeeming features, i.e., the love and care and self-sacrifice, which would in almost every case be there, but which do not justify the presence of those disfiguring ingredients. Nor do the child average things out in the way that you are doing. His perspective is different to yours. I have said he takes for granted – that is to say he undervalues – the clothing, food, and education which are given to him. Parents rest their minds too much on the material benefits which at such cost they give their children, and they hardly advert at all to the above catalogue of faults. The children see it quite the other way about, with the result that parents who are really devoted persons may in their children's eyes be tyrannical fathers and barging mothers.

Respect for Children

One has to be very tender with the peculiar material of youth. It will not do to say, "We give it so much affection, and then we have to give it so much discipline." Why that is almost the same as saying that you give it so much food and then so much starvation. I am afraid that the warmth must go on all the time; but in any event do not decorate with the grand name of discipline the type of treatment which I have been reprehending. That is not discipline. It is utter lack of discipline in you, and it is cruelty to the child. The appreciation must be there all the time, so that the child can count on it. On the other hand, if the atmosphere is wrong, the child will enter into itself like a snail into

its shell, and then its parents will know less than anybody else about it. It should be a bitter thought to any parents that their children were going outside for consolation, turning to others to tell their hopes and problems and to confide their secrets.

Nor does it restore the balance if, after treating the child rudely, you rush into the opposite extreme and give it great doses of emotionalism. For the latter only swings back again to the former attitude of disrespect. Disrespect! – a funny word. Yet, that is just the trouble; few there are who deem children to be subjects for respect. And yet they have a right to it. You must not place your children in the category of mere household possession. From the start you must treat them seriously as persons, respect them, even reverence them.



I wish you would read a truly wonderful article which appeared in the Legion Journal of September, 1938. It was written by Ethel Meagher, then an active Legionary, now a Carmelite nun. It was about babies; not about the usual aspect of feeding them and clothing them and putting them to bed, but about their souls. Her contention was that in them from the very first there is a well-developed soul which has vast understanding and can be influenced, even though it is only learning by slow degrees how to deal with its outside world. A reading of that profound article would teach parents the tremendous respect which from the first moment they must give to each newly-born being that is placed in their arms.

If you could begin thus, and continue that way, those false relationships between parent and child of which I have spoken earlier could not take root. Instead, sublime foundations would be laid, out of which would rise the perfect home.

So from the very moment of their birth treat your children as real people to whom respect is due as the primary and essential basis of association. Give them no less courtesy than you would give the lady in the bus or your colleague in the office. Listen to their questions, encourage them, and take the trouble of replying adequately to them; this can be made the better half of their education. Pay them the compliment of reasoning with them, and do not think that they will not understand and appreciate. As I look back, I can remember every time in my

childhood that people treated me with genuine respect and condescended to explain things to me.

A necessary part of respect is trust. Go out of your way to trust your children. Give them little jobs of responsibility. Seek their opinion; and having done so, follow it if at all possible. Thereby you infinitely develop that child; and what is more important, you bind it to you with links tougher and more precious than gold.

Children are Worthy of Respect

But here I must insist that this respect as a permanent feature can never proceed from a mere policy, nor from a mere feeling. Because in a minute that feeling and policy can change to something else. It must represent a profound conviction in you and not an emotion or even a reasoning. That conviction can only be based upon reality, that is on the certainty that children are worthy of respect and hence must receive it. How are you to get that conviction? In the same way in which the Legion of Mary tries to give it to its members, that is, through the doctrine of the Mystical body. You, too, must realise that in each one of those children Our Lord Himself is really living; that they are sanctuaries of the Holy Spirit. In the early days of the Church there was a great man called Origen who used every day kneel down and kiss his little son's breast because the Holy Spirit lived there.

If every parent acted in that spirit – though not necessarily showing it by the same action – nearly every child would be found retorting on that parent in the same spirit. Those ideal parents would have ideal children. If you appreciate the dignity of those children as temples of the Holy Spirit, in whom Our Lord is living and reproducing His own life, then as a logical sequence you will have respect for your children, and having that respect, you would treat them with respect.

You do children an injustice by thinking that they do not sense the various shadings of attitude which are taken up in their regard. They do – most accurately, and they respond in like measure. Sunflower-like, they expand towards those who show them the correct sort of attention. The devotion and admiration that every child naturally has for its parents bursts into full bloom. See the instinctive reaction towards good parents? “Whoever had a father and mother like mine?” Listen to their little boastings on the subject amongst their contemporaries. Every word that father and mother utter, everything they do, forms pattern and law for those children.

In that atmosphere the child’s character unfolds like plant life in a hot-house. They seek information. They try things. They weave plans. They feel responsible. They will gain that most necessary quality, courage. In such a home the battle of life – and death – is already being won.

What enchanting prospect! But only a

mirage unless you work towards it. It cannot be imposed upon children; nor injected into them by preaching at them. You must impose and preach it in subtle ways, i.e., by your example, by co-operation with them, and by answering the swarm of questions which your sympathetic attention will germinate to those little heads. Note that questions represent a desire to learn; so that the replies will be eagerly absorbed.

The Legion Forms the Right Attitude

But once again I touch the vital spot. Whence is to be got that correct attitude towards the child? Many are the quarters that propose to teach it, for today is the age of Child Guidance. Books on the subject are many, and child clinics are springing up like mushrooms. No doubt much good is being thereby done. But most of these would-be teachers neglect the real thing, which is the soul, and lay the stress on the externals. Hence they will never produce that inner, genuine, intense reverence for the child, and the ardent striving after its complete expansion, which can only come from the conviction that we are dealing with divine and eternal things.

Here the Legion enters in to help. As simple in its ideas and structure as a pulley or a lever or other device for multiplying power, the Legion is able to make vivid the whole circle of Catholic Doctrine and to turn it into motive-power for every Christian purpose.

The purpose which here concerns us is your children. They are in the Legion. The aim is to fashion them into what Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort calls "a legion of valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, to combat the world, the flesh and corrupted nature in those more than ever perilous times which are to come." But also there is an immediate outpouring of this power. It is into the present lives of your children. It fills school-time, play-time, home – every hour – with holy, practical idealism. In some cases that spirit is remodelling the homes, in which case it is a reversal of the natural order. What a fantastic thing it would be if the nobler side of home-building was thus left to the children! That must not be. It must proceed from all – especially from you, which brings us back to the purpose of this gathering, i.e., the mode of your co-operating with your Legionary children.

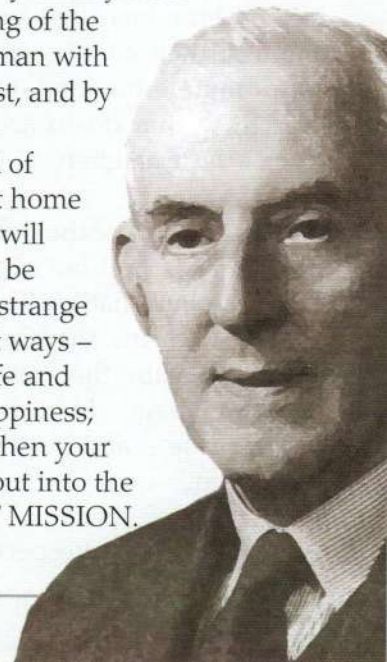
It will be brief; a few sentences will serve. First, you must imbibe the Legionary ideal. You can do this to some extent by studying the Legion Handbook. Your child, I expect, possesses a copy. Read it carefully and get to understand the system in which your child is being shaped. Then interest yourself in the child's membership. Stimulate it.

But the best sort of stimulation is fellow-membership. Assuredly you should become an Auxiliary member of the Legion. That common cause and outlook would be of immense help to your child. Then, if at all possible, to go on to the perfect finish by taking up

active membership. The usual objections will bob up in your minds: "I am too busy," or "What good would I be?" Don't listen to those phrases, or at least to the second of them. Inferiority complex? Why should you not be as good as anybody else? The Legion has room and place for everybody; and if your children are good enough for the Legion, you may be certain that you are.

There may be more substance in that other objection about being too busy. We know how hard the mother of a family has to work, but perhaps you could spare an evening off? If you can, I would urge that you take on active membership.

If you thus take pains to understand the Legion and to co-operate with its idealism, I think that to you may be promised a wonderful home, one where the atmosphere will be conditioned by the Legionary ideal of life, by the Mystical Body teaching of the relations of man with man in Christ, and by the fruitful Motherhood of Mary. In that home divine grace will rule and will be operative in strange and eminent ways – today, rich life and domestic happiness; tomorrow, when your children go out into the world, THAT MISSION.



Servant of God Frank Duff Commemoration Ceremony

Talk given by Fr. Paul Churchill
June 4th, 2017



Frank Duff was of course fully aware of Fatima. He once delighted at a Junior Curia Reunion when the young legionaries did a stage presentation of the Fatima story. When Myra House was purchased from the Vincent de Paul in 1966, he did a tour of the House for a group which is on record and mentioned that 1917 was a most significant year for in that year, the Vincent de Paul "came in here", that is into Myra House and St. Patrick's Conference was founded which led to the Legion and he said that it was the year of Our Lady's Apparitions at Fatima which presaged great things in a troubled world. Frank's abiding interest in the conversion of Russia would also take account of Our Lady's words at Fatima.

Scripture speaks of signs to come. The Book of the Apocalypse speaks of a sign appearing in heaven, a woman with twelve stars around her head. In St Luke's Gospel (Chap 21) Jesus speaks of signs to come. Those who would dismiss the events of Fatima as mere private revelation not binding anyone must remember that Jesus did alert us to signs to come, signs that would appear in the heavens. So while being alert to the possible subjective interpretation of events and always respecting the proper authority of the Church given by Christ to Peter and the apostles and their successors we would be wrong to pass this year by without some reference to Fatima.

There are at least three levels of signs we must take account of regarding Fatima.



The first and obvious one was the great miracle of 13th October 1917. The three children first saw Our Lady on the 13th May. She asked them to come back on the 13th of each month. On the 13th July she told them that a sign would be given on the 13th October. So, on that day (13th October 1917) at least 50,000 turned up. Incessant rain had everyone drenched. In the middle of the day the sun broke through and began to gyrate, jump up and down, change position and cast out colours of various shades that changed people.

FRANK DUFF COMMEMORATION

People screamed in panic as they thought the world would end. Mass hysteria? If so how explain that this was not just seen in Fatima but in many surrounding villages and towns. We have also to take account of the fact that among those who turned up were many sceptics and Marxists who believed that the fraud would be exposed and they were unable to doubt what they saw. So many papers that were anti-religious had to record what happened and many sceptics were converted.

Some have argued that there may be no supernatural cause to the event, that certain atmospheric conditions may have caused people to see what they did. But even were that the case we note that people like Evelyn Cusack would say that you cannot really predict the weather ahead for more than 48 hours and Michael Fisch would both say that that is even optimistic. So how explain that a full three months ahead a forecast was given that turned out as spectacular as it did?

A second level of signs were those witnessed on the occasion of the apparitions before that of October. While only Lucia, Jacinta and Francesco saw the apparition many others noticed what seemed like a small cloud or wisp of fog come over the Holm-oak. In the July apparition those present saw an orb or globe come from the east and stop above the Holm-oak. They also experienced at the apparitions, that the temperature at the place fell considerably although the temperatures

recorded that day were very high or that the sun darkened so much they could see the stars. So while they didn't see Our Lady they witnessed very strange phenomena.

The third great sign that all Europe saw and some elderly still alive, witness to was the great Aurora Borealis of January 25th 1938. Our Lady had told the children that a great sign would appear that would be the sign of another war. All over the Northern hemisphere it was recorded. One teacher in France kept this description written by one of his 10-year-old pupils,

"Yesterday evening there was a great red cloud; it was like a sheet of blood, then the cloud grew larger, forming great red threads, which kept going up, and below that, white threads, like chalk lines."

But everywhere it was the same, reports of this extraordinary aurora borealis seen even as far south as North Africa. Google it and you will see. And in less than two months Hitler invaded Austria. World War II was beginning as Our Lady had warned.

These events must make us pay greater attention to what Our Lady told the children. You can look it up in books or even Google it.

One aspect of the Fatima story is that in the apparition of 13th July Our Lady showed the children a vision of Hell. It terrified them, especially Jacinta. Lucia described seeing souls in human forms in red hot coals amid shrieks and

groans of sorrow and despair that horrified them and caused them to tremble with fear.



When I read it again a few weeks ago I remembered that Teresa of Avila had also seen such a vision in which she was given the experience of what it was like.

"What I felt, it seems to me, cannot even begin to be exaggerated; nor can it be understood. The bodily pains were so unbearable that though I had suffered excruciating ones in this life these were all nothing in comparison with the ones I experienced there. I saw furthermore that they would go on without end and without ever ceasing. This, however, was nothing next to the soul's agonising: with such a despairing and tormenting unhappiness that I don't know how to word it strongly enough. The fact is that I don't know how to give a sufficiently powerful description of that interior fire and that despair, coming in addition to such extreme torments and pains. I repeat the worst was that interior fire and despair" (Life, Ch 32).

You will find too in the Dialogues of St. Catherine of Siena similar comments. But I'll return to her later.

In an interview with a priest many years later Lucia emphasised: there are souls in hell. What she saw was not a what can be but it has already happened.

Fr Lombardi pushed her that there was still hope. But Lucia replied,

*"No father. Many will be lost!"
Souls in hell for eternity."*

No wonder it is a place of the most utter despair. Jacinta had also spoken similarly.

But the primary message is one of great hope and joy. In the June apparition Our Lady said,

"Do not be disheartened. My Immaculate Heart will never abandon you, but will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God!"

Our Lady has asked us to pray and do penance as the best ways of helping souls to pull out of that road to Hell. She asked us to pray the Rosary. The biggest mistake made in the world today, said Lucia, is that people give up praying.

So while given a vision of Hell the primary image that remained was that of the beautiful lady and its heavenly dimension. The children were allowed a peek into heaven so to speak and Jacinta and Francesco were to be called there within 3 years of the apparitions. The primary focus then is of Heaven.

While we must keep alert to the reality of Hell (mentioned by Our Lord 16 times in the Gospels) our primary focus must be God and that communion of Saints and Angels headed by Our Lady to which we are invited. God and the whole heavenly Court want us there. As Jesus said,

"I will go and prepare a place for you there and when I return I will take you to where I am" (Jn 15).

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Hosts".

And in fact I have noticed this about Mass. If you think about the liturgy of the Mass it is directed mainly to that heavenly reality. At Mass we are participating in a hidden mysterious way in the heavenly liturgy. Our focus is on God and on the Lamb who offers himself on our behalf before the throne of God. And being surrounded by the heavenly host we join them in giving Glory to God in the Highest and singing "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Hosts". Our Communion is a communion with the blood of Christ and through that with the whole host of saints washed clean by the blood of Jesus. The vision of Knock does represent that reality to which we are all called, that Universe of God's inner sanctum with the Lamb and angels and saints in which Our Lady is first.

There in Heaven there is no place for Hell. Indeed, apart from the occasional reading at Mass hell has no place because our focus is on God. It reminds me of what St. Catherine said, "As the saints exult in the sight of Me, refreshing themselves with joyousness in the fruit of their toils borne for Me with such abundance of love, and displeasure of themselves, so does the sight of the Devil revive these wretched ones to torments." She is comparing the difference of those in Heaven to those in Hell. It reminds me too of Our Lord's words when he spoke of a deep

chasm between Heaven and Hell such that it is impossible to pass from one to the other. Indeed, because we will be so absorbed with God in Heaven Hell will not enter our consciousness.

The saints too are more focused on God than on evil. I notice in Frank Duff that although he is concerned to save souls (implying a concern that some may be lost) his focus is always positive and centred on God.

The closer we come to God the more God occupies us. While in this world we will be at risk. We must keep close to God and keep having recourse to him. Let me quote from Lucia in words she sent to a priest and is useful for us all: "What I recommend to you above all is that you get close to the tabernacle and pray. Never consider the time wasted that you spend in prayer. You will discover that in prayer God communicates to you a light, strength and grace you need to do all he expects of you. Let time be lacking for everything else but never for prayer. The biggest cause of evil in the world is the lack of union with God in prayer. Only God's strength can sustain us"



As we reflect on Fatima on its 100th anniversary it is worth remembering that Fatima is a sign that God does not abandon us. God does intervene in our world. Just as he did at the beginning of the great act of redemption. And here it is worth stopping to think and even try and get into the Immaculate heart of Mary. Can you imagine a 13/14 year old girl who knows she has had no dealings with a man and yet is pregnant! What naturally must she think? "How come although having had no dealings with a man I am pregnant. This is a miracle. This must be God. And so my soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, our Saviour. And surely all generations must call me blessed since this is unique among women!" It is worth stopping to think about what a woman who had no dealings of a physical nature with a man would think. She knows God is real and beside us. God can and does intervene. Let our hearts not be afraid. Let us have great peace in them. God is with us. And he will intervene again at the appropriate hour.

"Don't be disheartened. My Immaculate heart will never abandon you!"

Fatima is one of the signs of this mother of great tender love who has us in her careful and loving gaze. She seems to emphasise two things as part of a healthy relationship with her, namely the saying of the Rosary and the wearing of the brown scapular. We could mention too the practice of the 5 first Saturdays.

These are mentioned in the Handbook. Whatever way we do it we must keep close to Our Lady too, who has shown us her heavenly reality. And we must follow her words of doing whatever her Son asks us, focusing on him and staying in his company. And we must pray constantly to her, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."



Visit to Legion of Mary in Brazil

By *Tadhg McMahon*

National Council Officers' Conference:

The main event was a National Council Officers' Conference in São Paulo at which the Concilium was represented by four Concilium correspondents to most of the eleven higher councils, directly attached to Concilium. They were Paddy Fay, Manual Cação, his wife, Isabel, and the present writer, Tadhg McMahon. Fifty years ago I had spent three years travelling through most of Brazil as Legion Envoy, and after the conference in São Paulo I visited eight Legion councils, including six Senatus with two of their affiliated Regiae, journeying to the Belem Senatus at the mouth of the Amazon, and to the far southern city of Santa Maria, adjacent to Argentina, in about two weeks. The efficiency of Brazil airlines facilitated these journeys.



The conference in São Paulo took place in the final weekend of January. The four Concilium representatives were welcomed with the usual warmhearted fraternal friendship by the Brazilian legionaries in the capacious Frank Duff House of Formation of the Senatus of São Paulo in the town of Mogi das Cruzes, not much more than an hour's journey from the city of São Paulo. Those present included Bishop Edson de Castro Homem, representative to the Legion of the National Conference of the Brazilian Hierarchy and 63 council officers from nine Senatus and Regiae representing Legionaries from all parts of this huge country, which is a hundred times the size of Ireland, and which has over 200,000 active Legionaries and thousands of auxiliaries.



The conference dealt with practical issues and ways of deepening the spirituality of members and developing the Legion apostolate to face contemporary challenges to the Christian faith. Special attention was given to a better understanding of the life of our Founder, the Servant of God Frank Duff, and the commitment to renew and rejuvenate the Legion. Bishop Edson de Castro Homem, who besides being the representative of the Brazilian Hierarchy to the Legion, is Bishop of the north-eastern Diocese of Iguatu, five hours away by plane, invited us to avail of the Marian Year; this year was declared a Marian Year in Brazil, to see it as an invitation to growth and renewal. We were reminded that this year is also the tercentenary of Our Lady Aparecida, the chief patron of Brazil.

The first section of the gathering dealt with the most useful ways that various councils could cooperate with events

and celebrations that involved the whole Church in Brazil and not just individual regions. Such events included the annual Legion pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady Aparecida, ways of cooperating with Peregrinatio Pro Christo projects, and the Brazilian Legion magazine. Arrangements were made to allocate the production of the magazine to three different councils, namely: São Paulo, Belo Horizonte and the Regia of Brasilia for a period of three years each, all decided on a voluntary basis. Also, it was necessary to clarify the juridical status of the Legion in line with Brazilian law and appropriate legal guidance was given by legal professionals acting as solicitors for the Legion in Brazil. A special talk by Paddy Fay was on the various Legion publications in English that might be usefully translated into Portuguese for the thousands of members in Brazil not to mention those in Europe – Portugal; and Africa - Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique.



NATIONAL GATHERING OF LEGION OFFICERS IN SAO PAULO REPRESENTING ALL THE SENATUS AND REGIAE OF BRAZIL

The most solemn event of the weekend was the consecration of the Chapel, attached to the Frank Duff House of Formation, by the local Bishop of Mogi das Cruzes, Dom Pedro Luis Stringini during the Eucharist in which Concelebrants were Bishop Dom Edson Castro Homem and Rev. Fr. Jaime, Spiritual Director of the Senatus of Ponta Grossa.

While attention was given to administrative matters, the main thrust was on renewal of the Legion spirit, learning particularly from the handbook and from the life of the Founder and

giving special attention also to the lives of Venerable Edel Quinn and the Servant of God Alfie Lambe, who while in Latin America spent some of his time in Brazil. A particular message from Bishop Edson was to learn from the charism in today's Church while continuing to treasure the Legion's charism



Alfie Lambe



Edel Quinn



Frank Duff

Visits by Tadhg McMahon to eight cities throughout Brazil:

In the case of the visit to the Amazonian city of Belem and its adjacent Regia, Castanhal, I was accompanied by the President of the Senatus of Recife. The visit to Recife also included a visit with two meetings. A visit was made to the Regia of João Pessoa, a Regia that administers the Legion in the State of Paraiba, of which João Pessoa is the capital. A meeting was held with officers in a Recife suburb too. If possible, Legion visits are normally most effective if done in pairs. Visits to the councils, Regiae and Senatus, were mainly occasions of strengthening the bonds between the Concilium, representing the world Legion family and the principal higher Legion councils in Brazil. Photos will show the truly joyful and fraternal nature of the visits with all members encountered at various places more than eager to bond with Concilium, to learn more about developing their Legion spirituality and apostolate, and learning also about Frank Duff and his heroic life.







Strengthening Legion bonds – in the case of visits and meetings between officers of a Senatus and those of a council administered by the Senatus tensions were resolved because my visit facilitated open dialogue between both sets of officers. One is reminded of the statement in the handbook about 'the very essence of a Legion council' namely 'free and frank discussion'.

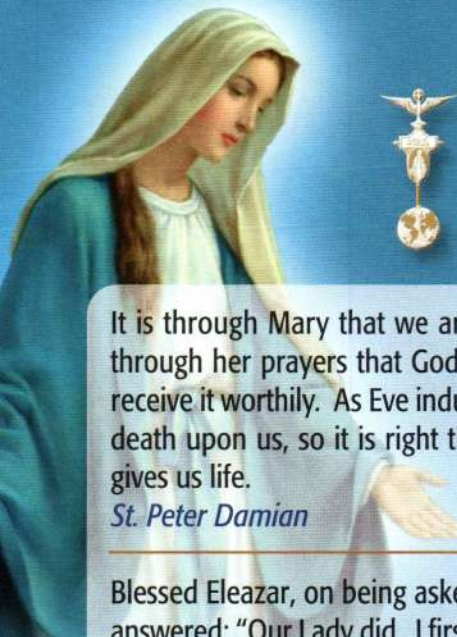
There was also deep joy in meeting legionaries who have given a lifelong service to Our Lady, one an active

member of 92, another an auxiliary of 101, and a retired Bishop, a Frenchman, who continues to support the Legion, although his health has been impaired through so many years working in tropical humid regions.

It was a source of great joy too to meet so many young Brazilian priests actively supporting the Legion. I recall that over 50 years ago a significant number of the priests were from Europe. On this visit the priests met were all Brazilians, who showed a real enthusiasm for the Legion of Mary.

Above all, members looked on me as being extremely privileged to have worked with the Servant of God Frank Duff, who corresponded with me on a fortnightly basis during my Envoyship, his letters being normally two to four pages long.

Finally, the visit to Brazil gave the Concilium the opportunity to acknowledge the warmhearted support for the Legion from priests and Bishops in Brazil and the dedicated commitment of the many thousands of Legionaries to continuing the extension and development of the Legion as it seeks ever more to place itself as an effective and committed instrument at the disposition of the Bishops and priests and strengthening its bonds with the worldwide Legion through regular contact with the Concilium.



Praises of Mary

It is through Mary that we are able to eat the Bread of Heaven every day; it is through her prayers that God inspires us to receive it and grants us the grace to receive it worthily. As Eve induced man to eat of the forbidden fruit which brought death upon us, so it is right that Mary should prompt us to eat the Bread which gives us life.

St. Peter Damian

Blessed Eleazar, on being asked one day who had taught him to meditate so well, answered: "Our Lady did. I first consider my own worthlessness and wretchedness. I then turn towards my sweet Mother, and ask her to place in my heart and on my lips whatever is pleasing to her and to her Son; and I say a Hail Mary. After that I always have enough matter for meditation."

Blessed Eleazar

Do not content yourself with saying a few Hail Marys every day in honour of Our Lady, but say five decades, and if you have time, even fifteen decades of the Rosary. At the hour of your death you will bless the day on which you began this holy practice.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort

Oh, if Mary were but known, how much happier, how much holier, how much less worldly should we be and how much more should we be living images of our sole Lord and Saviour, her dearest and most Blessed Son!

Fr. F.W. Faber

Yes, welcoming Jesus and bringing Him to others is the true joy of Christians! Dear brothers and sisters, let us follow and imitate Mary, a deeply Eucharistic soul, and our whole life can become a Magnificat, praise of God. May this be the grace that we ask from the Virgin Most Holy.

Pope Benedict XVI

The most powerful means we have for drawing down the benevolence of Mary toward us is a virtue. That virtue is love for our neighbour.

St. Gregory Nazianzen



ARTICLE FOR INTERCOM MAGAZINE

The Legion of Mary, Maynooth University

“Come O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love...”.

It is with these few opening words that the members of the weekly Maynooth University Legion of Mary meeting begin stoking up their fire of faith. And we have learned that they are words not to be said lightly. A university campus is always full of ideas and high spirit and so deliberately inviting the Holy Spirit into this has led us to all kinds of marvels and wonders and we have to be ready for the adventure.

The Legion of Mary movement was founded in 1921 in the heart of Dublin city. Its founder, Frank Duff, was seeking a way for Catholics to live out their baptismal vocation as apostles. Following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, Frank gathered a small group together under the patronage of Our Lady of Mercy. The association proved to be inspired and it blossomed. Many visiting bishops for the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin 1932 brought the Legion of Mary idea of lay apostolate back with them to their dioceses around the world. In a short 90 years the small group in Dublin has mushroomed into an

estimated 4 million active members on every continent; everyone of those members taking a concrete step to be missionary disciples of Jesus Christ by each week doing two hours of mission and attending their praesidium* meeting.

The Maynooth University praesidium has been in existence in one guise or another for about 40 years. The current 18 members who meet on Mondays at 4pm in Maynooth North Campus come for all sorts of reasons. For one thing they are searching to give a deeper meaning to life. The social environment in university is marked by individualism and a cheapening of human dignity – particularly with the normalisation of overindulgence in alcohol and throwaway sexual relationships. Against a background of 12,000 students our members come to the “school of Mary, Mother of God” to pray and discern how best to live holy lives. The Legion of Mary way is an active one, so we pray how can we do God’s will and then we get to work!





In our efforts to reach out and create points of contact with people the Holy Spirit has guided us to be creative in our initiatives. For example, we have holy hours for different intentions e.g. refugees or healing in relationships and we ask passers-by to come in and light a candle. We organise a St Brigid's cross-making workshop in a corridor and again invite passers-by to participate. Or simply we go out in pairs on the campus letting people know about Catholic events on campus. Our works always have the focus of engaging people in a gentle conversation and reflection on the love of God and life's deeper meaning.

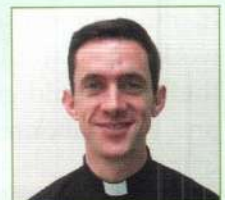
The words of the psalm say "they go out, they go out full of tears carrying seed for the sowing; they come back, they come back full of song carrying their sheaves." This might sum up our experience of being legionaries on a university campus. Often we go out shy of who we will meet or how we will be perceived but when we come back we share stories of a student who needed encouragement in prayer, or who was

waiting for an opportunity to come back to the Church, or who needed to hear that they were loved and cherished without strings attached. At our meeting we marvel at each other's reports of sharing the "good news of great joy".

And we take time to "withdraw to a desert place and pray". This year we pilgrimaged to the shrines of St Kevin in Glendalough and St Ciaran in Clonmacnois for a day of prayer... and a bit of craic, and to ask these two great evangelising saints to be with us in our efforts.

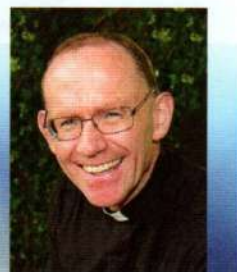
One conviction we deepen in the Legion school of Mary is that it is in giving we receive. There's no doubt we have received blessings in abundance from what we give. Thanks and praise be to the intercession of Mary, the Mother of Divine Mercy who is our patron and all glory and honour to our Lord Jesus Christ!

*Deacon Declan Lohan
Spiritual Director
Ordained Priest in July 2017*



*praesidium is the name given to the weekly meeting of the Legion of Mary. Named after the smallest unit of the Roman Army which is reputedly the most powerful and indomitable army in history.

HOMILY OF BISHOP FINTAN MONAHAN FOR THE LEGION OF MARY PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY'S SHRINE, KNOCK



"The history of a nation is not in parliaments and battlefields, but in what people say to each other on fair days and high days, and how they farm and quarrel and go on pilgrimage." *The words of W.B. Yeats – in Stories from Carleton.*

Legion Pilgrimage being Fair Day

This religious event today at Knock is all of that and perhaps more. What we are doing now is a bit like the National Ploughing Championships during the week. This National Pilgrimage of the Legion of Mary is a "fair day" and a "high day", a day in which we "plough the furrow" and "make hay" in religious terms. It is a day, as Yeats says in which many of us may "quarrel" and most certainly we are here "on pilgrimage" and in so doing make history as we make our annual Legion of Mary trip to this Holy Shrine of Our Lady under the Legion banner.

The Parable of the Vineyard

The Gospel today of the workers in the vineyard is a challenging one. While on the one hand it gives a sense of the hugely generous kindness of our God – from the logical point of view it doesn't fit into our sense of fair play that a worker who would arrive at the end of the day should get the same wage as one who laboured in the heat of the whole day!

God's ways not our ways

However, the first reading reminds us that our ways are not God's ways and we often struggle to cope with that!

Justice and Grace – Manikon Eros

Justice and grace do not always fit well together in the vision of our God. The parable of today's Gospel shows that the reign of God is based on the latter, not the former. Mark Patrick Hederman, once Abbot of Glenstal, had an interesting book some years ago entitled *Manikon Eros*, the Greek description of God with crazy, mad, even lunatic, love. The love and mercy of God is beyond our human sense of limitations and description and definition and understanding.

No God at the check-out!

Joseph Cassidy, the former Archbishop of Tuam, God be good to him, in his book *These Might Help* – has an interesting reflection on this Gospel entitled "No God at the check-out". The whole point of this parable, according to Archbishop Joe is the

immensity of God's generosity. There is no end to it. No limit to it! It's bountifully there! And freely given! There's no God with a calculator at the entrance to the vineyard, he says. And there's no God at the check-out in the supermarket either! If you were really in need of his generosity, if you were really hungry for his forgiveness, he'd give you everything in the shop!

Attractive image of God

I find this image of God most attractive! As the students in school would say: "bring this on"! This is the type of God who inspires, enlivens and attracts and sustains us with magnetic allure, love and grace!

Association with the Legion of Mary

For a long number of years I have had the privilege of being associated with the Legion of Mary in varying capacities. A number of times I went on Peregrinatio Pro Christo (PPC) as a seminarian and as a young priest. I also had the privilege of assisting in various capacities the wonderful and outstanding John B. McLoughlin who dedicated much of his life, energy and expertise to the Legion of Mary in Saint Jarlath's College, Tuam, and further afield. I am so glad to be able to support the Legion in whatever way I can in the diocese of Killaloe and look forward to the annual gathering with Mass and a meal in Ennis again this Autumn!

Legion of Mary

I always loved the poetic, musical, spiritual and theological antiphon that

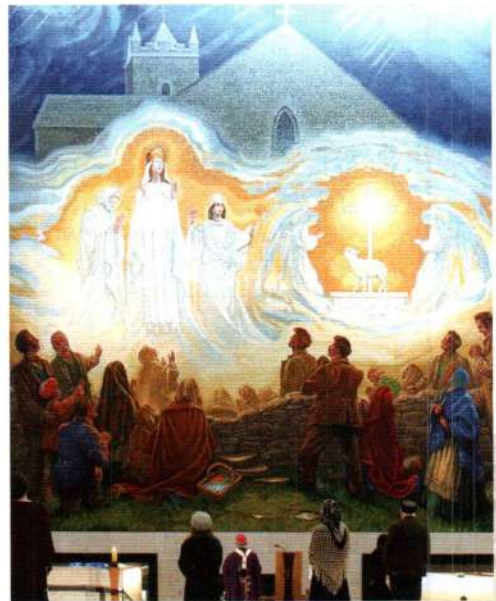
is said so often at the Legion prayers: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array". In that apocalyptic text there is so much to ponder, so much that gives a clear picture and insight into the mother of God in whose house we are on pilgrimage to today.

Mary as Morning Star

What a great hope filled image of Mary as morning star in "who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising". Mary our hope, our mother, our protector in times of darkness and need.

Fair as the moon, bright as the sun

The beauty and attractiveness and motherly quality of Mary is captured in the fairness, the brightness, the glow the light that she brings to our lives as the morning star and beyond.



Pieta – Article

A number of years ago I read an article in which the author gave a reflection on what is one of the most famous statues in the world, Michelangelo's Pieta. He pointed out that the young Michelangelo, who was only 24 when he sculpted the masterpiece, was often criticised for the almost serene, calm look on the face of Mary at that moment of intense suffering with her crucified Son in her arms. Many, however have defended him, down through the ages pointing out it portrayed a deep and mature understanding of the Christian confidence that the sufferings of life can be mitigated and that death is not the final event. The Pieta is a statement of hope with an Easter dimension.

As terrible as an army set in battle array

There is also something very appealing in the tough image of Mary being as "terrible as an army set in battle array". The scriptural mother of God is no shrinking violet, but is strong, resilient, well able to cope with adversity and all that life throws at her. I love the Evie Hone window of Manresa House, the Jesuit Centre for Prayer and spirituality in Dollymount. In that Pentecost image the disciples are fearful, distressed, lacking courage, but Mary is strong, encouraging, rock like, a courageous leader!

Coat of Arms

This time last year – I was giving a presentation in Killaloe diocese and was explaining the detail of my then

recently designed episcopal Coat of Arms that was designed for me. During question time a man from the audience queried the usefulness and relevance in this day and age of a Coat of Arms. In explaining the symbolic importance of it the Legion symbolism and imagery was most helpful. The Legion uses the imagery of the Roman Legion Army going into battle, the symbols of the Standard and the Vexillum – that we are called to do spiritual battle against the darkness of life and the world around us. As followers of Jesus Christ we are no longer mere creatures of this world and we need to be on our guard against the forces that work against us. Pope Francis, being a disciple of St. Ignatius talks a lot about the dark forces of the world (the enemy of human nature – Saint Ignatius) and our constant battle against this in our "Christian warfare". In that important context a Coat of Arms has great relevance.

A climate of Moral Relativism

One of the sad features of modern life is that the distinction between good and bad, between sin and grace has been blurred and some would even deny the existence of evil. The loss of this sense of sin is concerning and can in a subliminal way work against encouraging people towards faith. From the moral perspective there are many broad issues of concern in the world we live in at present – the threat of international warfare, the challenge we are going to have nationally in the Springtime to protect and maintain the right to life of the unborn, the ongoing

struggle it is going to be to maintain a religious presence in education, the right to have a religious voice in the public sphere. Yet in all of this the “Pentecost Mary”, the “Morning Star” is with us, inspiring us, leading us, guiding us in response to our prayer. “Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array”!

Why the success of the Legion?

So how and why has the Legion been such a great success for so many years? No doubt it's because of the legacy of many stars and heroes, saintly, holy and virtuous people like Frank Duff, Alfie Lamb, Edel Quinn, Saint Louis Marie de Montfort, Our Lady herself.

Another reason of course is that the Legion of Mary is intensely practical. It is a great combination of prayer and action, Mary and Martha.

The Legion is also evangelical or missionary at its core. Just look at the many PPC and Maria et Patria, journeying for Christ projects at home and abroad.

The Legion is not introspective, overly concerned with its own image. Just this week I noticed the Legion was prominent at the National Ploughing Championships. There they were at the heart of the market as good as the biggest and best business with a stall “selling” the Gospel to the many hundreds of thousands who attended. Well done to all involved! Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) calls us to move from

maintenance to missionary mode. The Legion captures the spirit of that in their many projects and efforts.

Promotion of Vocations

Recent analysis of a survey of priests shows that over one third said they had first had experience of prayer and devotion and encouragement towards priesthood through the Legion of Mary. Other devotional groups like Focolare, Youth 2000, Taizé, Divine Mercy, Medjugorje, Fatima and Lourdes prayer groups, Eucharistic Adoration, Net and Focus Youth Ministries, Pope John Paul II Awards are also a great help in this important quest to foster and develop vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Prayer for continued success of the Legion

While nationally the Legion of Mary, like many religious organizations may not be as strong as it once was – it continues to grow and thrive and expand in some of the developing countries. Long may the Legion of Mary continue to be a great leaven and force for the good in our society and in our Church. It's never too late to come on board and join in on the good work, even if it is at the 9th hour like the workers in today's Gospel. With Mary, the mother of God on our side who can be against us?

“Who is she that cometh forth, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array”. Amen!



NORTH AMERICA

U.S.A. In **Boston Senatus** a praesidium prayed the Rosary on Boston Common, making good contacts there, and joined a Chinese praesidium to evangelise in Chinatown. A praesidium doing visitation had 12 Enthronements of the Sacred Heart. Other reports show four non-Catholics baptised, restaurant contact and prison visitation. The Vietnamese Curia promotes the Rosary in apartment blocks and conducts Bible study in prisons. Norwood Curia organise Mass for two nursing homes. The Cape Verdean Curia does home visitation. **Chicago Senatus** reported 120 legionaries from five States attended the Annual May Gathering weekend in Chicago. Crowd contact was conducted at two Marts by the Korean Comitium. Rockford Curia participated in crowd contact in Millennium Park and reported three returns to the Church. A Legion booth at a 5 Day Event at DuPage Co. Fair was staffed from 10am till 10pm each day. A Curia in Joliet did crowd contact in three cities. A praesidium of 21 members in another Curia in Joliet has door to door visits as a main work, resulting in a remarkable increase in Mass attendance. **Cincinnati Senatus** reported two persons returned to the Faith and another undertook the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme. A presentation on the Legion was given to seven priests in Munchie. Kokoma Comitium hosted two Marian Conferences.

Houston Senatus organised a Peregrinatio Pro Christo to New Orleans. 1,027 homes were visited. Many people who had lost everything in Hurricane Katrina were grateful for the visit. One praesidium conducts an apostolate to the homeless from Fatima House, which has become a haven of hospitality and Prayer for the marginalised. Bay Area Curia has conducted a Catholic information table for 25 years with amazing results. Many praesidia have Patricians groups. Eight praesidia in **Los Angeles Senatus** undertook Exploratio Dominicalis. A praesidium do contact work in a park and operate a book barrow at busy intersections. Some of the works mentioned in reports to the Senatus are home visitation, bringing Holy Communion to the elderly and the sick, and Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes. Newark Comitium, attached to **New York Senatus**, reported that Essex Hispanic Curia organised a Pilgrimage to St. Anthony's Shrine, Garrison, New York; 450 attended with two priests. 300 people received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A praesidium organises a weekly subway Rosary at a book barrow where hundreds are contacted and given leaflets on the Mass and Confession. Visits to a hospital with a Spiritual Director resulted in 126 patients receiving Holy Communion; many lapsed Catholics had talks with the priest. South Bronx Curia reported 2,476 home visits, 1,006 visits to nursing homes, 256 hospital visits, book barrow, and crowd

contact and calling on 5,097 homes, doing Parish Census, **Philadelphia Senatus:** One praesidium has an apostolate to young men who gather at street corners. In Norristown Comitium some praesidia operate a drop-in centre twice a week for homeless men. The Seminary praesidium has nine members. A new praesidium has begun at the Cathedral. Camden Comitium, N.J., does prison ministry and makes contacts on boardwalks and beaches and at farmers' markets. Bucks Co. Curia reports door to door and train station evangelisation. Delaware Co. South Curia had a former member ordained to the Priesthood and another to the Permanent Diaconate. In Metuchen Comitium, the Hispanic Curia evangelised 50 families. Three couples received the Sacrament of Matrimony, three adults were baptised and ten persons received the Sacrament of Confirmation. **San Francisco Senatus** reported that in conjunction with other Catholic groups, legionaries helped to organise a very successful Annual Rosary Rally where several priests heard Confessions. In Anchorage, Alaska, a 91 year old Vietnamese woman was catechised and received all Sacraments before she died. North West Korean Comitium reported that 2,500 homes were visited on Peregrinatio Pro Christo to Half Moon Bay. Two marriages were saved through encouraging couples to attend a series of Marriage Enrichment Renewal meetings. Two lapsed Catholics resumed faith practice. A praesidium gained 14 auxiliaries through visitation of 85 homes. One Curia hosts a monthly Frank Duff prayer meeting. A Spanish Curia circulated the Pilgrim statue to 300 homes. In **St. Louis Senatus** numerous conversions were reported due to a 3-day Retreat

conducted in a prison and prayer services in detention centres. Some of the inmates have taken on auxiliary membership. Legionaries organised a public Rosary in Francis Park, contacting the youth. Home to home visits are shown in all reports. Some of the results obtained were: 18 returned to the Sacraments and 42 lapsed attended Holy Mass; eight adults were received into the Church; seven couples were encouraged to have Church marriages and there were 12 Baptisms. Two new praesidia started. All reports presented to **Arlington Regia** mention home visitation and Pilgrim statue visits. The Regia organised a Blessed Virgin Mary Birthday Mass and a Spiritual Directors' appreciation picnic. 38 Inmates attended a 4-day Retreat in a women's prison. They had a talk in Christendom College promoting the Legion. They hosted a TEAM Retreat (Teenage enrichment for the Apostles of Mary); this was started in 1993 by Fr. Peffley and is an annual outdoor Retreat with fun for teenage legionaries and is open to others as a form of recruiting. **Miami Regia:** A Retreat was conducted by the Auxiliary Bishop of Miami, Bishop Peter Baldacchino, with 140 present. Reports from praesidia indicated door to door work, Pilgrim statue visits, nursing home visits and work with juniors. Prison visitation and Street evangelisation are done also. The Haitian Curia with 20 praesidia has 20 junior praesidia attached. The Regia sadly accepted the resignation on age-grounds of Fr. Richard Soulliere. Before taking on the Spiritual Directorship of the Regia, Fr. Richard was an ardent legionary and served first as an Extension Worker and later as Legion Envoy to Mexico before going on for the priesthood. The affiliated Regina Pacis Comitium

serves the Spanish-speaking community with three attached Curiae and a total of 46 praesidia. Southwest Florida Curia mentioned 145 Enthronements of the Sacred Heart in homes as a result of a recent effort.

CANADA: In the **Senatus of Toronto** the eight praesidia in Kingston Curia, attached to the **Ottawa Regia**, report staffing a Legion booth at a market on a rota basis. A praesidium in Holy Family Parish has a membership of 17, of whom 8 are Praetorians. They have two vibrant junior praesidia. Their pastor is Spiritual Director to all three praesidia. Works in Hamilton Comitium included street apostolate, approaching 377 persons and distributing 186 Miraculous Medals. A praesidium in Winnipeg did an outreach, going door to door, calling on 319 homes, making 129 contacts. They also visit three prisons. **Montreal Senatus** reported Most Reverend Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montreal, was the main celebrant at the Mass for the 95th Anniversary of the Legion of Mary. A new praesidium undertakes apostolates such as crowd contact, Pilgrim statue visitation, organising Pilgrimages and praying with the dying. One Korean Curia reports four conversions and an attendance of 157 at a Marian Day celebration. The Korean Curia in Calgary organised a 33 day True Devotion to Mary preparation in honour of Our Lady of Fatima. A praesidium in **Edmonton Comitium** took Pilgrim statues to 100 homes and two host families reported miraculous recoveries for members with severe limb injuries. A praesidium in **Vancouver Comitium** visit homes, also retirement homes, take Holy Communion

to 135 housebound, help at funerals and Masses, and bring the wheelchair-bound to the Church. Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes is one of the works of another praesidium. The Regina Mundi Curia report highlights the 1st Annual Report of Our Lady of Grace praesidium: Their works include two members who visit a Female Correctional Centre for prayer sessions weekly. They also visit inmates in the Maximum Security area. Mass is held monthly in the prison with 15-20 attending. Two legionaries, in another praesidium, through their evangelisation, counselling and prayers, assisted a couple who were in the process of a divorce to get back together again.

MEXICO: The extension worker in **Mexico City Senatus** helped to set up a new praesidium in the Diocese of Texcoco. The Comitium of Ayutla celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a Congress. Some Legion meetings on ranches are held in the local "Mixteco" dialect. The Comitium in Oaxaca work with patients suffering from AIDS and have an apostolate to street girls. A Curia reported the conversion of six Jehovah Witnesses. A Curia set up a junior praesidium mostly with family members. One Comitium in **Merida Senatus** has 13 junior praesidia attached and another has a junior Curia attached. One Comitium reported meeting 6,600 members of the sects and 17,000 Catholics, results included 34 adult Baptisms and 87 marriages. The Comitium of Mazatlán, attached to the **Durango Regia**, organised eight Retreats with an attendance of over 100 at each. In Guadalajara Regia an ex-legionary now a seminarian, is setting up a praesidium

in the seminary. Rural praesidia organise and lead the Celebration of the Word in the Ranchos. A number of legionaries in **Hermosilla Regia** are trained catechists. While some teach the children, others teach the parents; the parents who are practising are encouraged to join the Legion. Legionaries in **Monterrey Regia** do crowd contact at city bus stops. During the summer, groups of legionaries organised projects in different distant Barrios, visiting all the homes and finalising each project with a Mass. They also visit a women's prison, teaching the inmates Arts and Crafts and introducing them to prayer.

ASIA

INDONESIA: Malang Senatus reported two new Comitua and a number of senior and junior praesidia were set up. The legionary apostolate includes visitation of the old, the blind and sick and cleaning of their homes, also visiting prisons and an orphanage, distribution of Holy Communion, and teaching Sunday school. In **Jakarta Senatus** Legionaries are engaged in visitation of the sick and dying and arranging to have them anointed. Baptisms, returns to the Sacraments and visits to people of all faiths were reported. There is contact with street children.

JAPAN: Osaka Senatus reported a Pilgrimage was organised to Hahramach Church, Fukushima, an earthquake-affected city in one of the Victim Support areas of Tokyo Diocese. A praesidium in Tamastukuri Church had its 3,000th meeting in July 2016. A new translation of the commentary for the Frank Duff DVD is now available in Japanese. Visitation of nursing homes and hospitals; helping at

Liturgical Services and Sunday schools are among works undertaken in **Nagasaki Regia**. Takatsuki Church praesidium celebrated its 1500th meeting. The legionaries bring Holy Communion to the sick, and read for the visually impaired.

KOREA: Incheon Regia, attached to **Seoul Senatus**, has 23,436 active members and 26,015 auxiliaries. They enrolled 6,412 persons in RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) and recorded 3,996 catechumen Baptisms. A praesidium in **Chuncheon Regia**, visiting people living alone reported 3 people aged 84-89 years old being baptised. **East Seoul Regia** recorded 3,691 Baptisms, including a 103 year-old lady and her son. In **Gwangju Senatus** reports from the attached Regiae of **Busan, Jeonju, Masan** and **Jeju** show large numbers of catechumens recruited and many baptisms and returns to the sacraments. Most reports to **Daegu Senatus** show recruitment of catechumens, Baptisms, returns to the Sacraments, visitation of hospitals and Welfare Institutions and recruitment of new legionaries. The Senatus celebrated its 60th Anniversary on 6th June 2017. Yonggye Comitium formed a new praesidium of military personnel. A big increase in junior membership was reported.

MALAYSIA: Reports to the **Kuala Lumpur Regia** show: Orphanage, home and hospital visitation; visitation of the aged, sick, bereaved families and the lapsed. Other works include conducting classes for migrants, block Rosaries in May and October, visiting an Aboriginal village, and a Shelter for HIV patients. One legionary entered a seminary. **EAST MALAYSIA:** In Kuching Comitium a Curia was inaugurated and a new

praesidium established. The 60th Anniversary of the Legion in Sibu Comitium was celebrated, also the 50th anniversary of the English-speaking Curia. The Curia in the Diocese of Miri, has split into two separate Curiae.

SINGAPORE: In Singapore Senatus legionaries are engaged in Hospital and Nursing Home visitation, and also helping at funerals and wakes. A growing number of dedicated legionaries who served as active members for decades are now on the auxiliary roll due to various illnesses. A junior Curia has 16 praesidia; they organised an outreach programme and a Legion camp outing. The Senatus received reports from English and Chinese-speaking Curiae in Brunei.

EUROPE

AUSTRIA: Vienna Senatus celebrated its 800th meeting in April. A Mass was celebrated in Vienna Cathedral for Venerable Edel Quinn. A student praesidium undertakes an apostolate to teenagers and a Syrian junior praesidium runs a group for Syrian children. A student praesidium and a junior praesidium both had to split because of big numbers. A meeting for priests was held. Works being undertaken by legionaries include home and prison visitation, also contact with lapsed and homeless people. A woman has converted from Buddhism. Hollabrunn Comitium undertook an apostolate in the Red Light area. The consecration to Our Lady was made by 30 legionaries in Innsbruck Comitium.

BELARUS: Reports to Minsk Comitium show works undertaken include visitation of sick and elderly parishioners and veterans' homes, visits to nursing homes with the

priest, and preparing residents for Confession. Two new junior praesidia were established. Bishop Iosif Staneuski from Grodno attended the December Comitium meeting, and thanked the legionaries for their work.

CROATIA: Zagreb Regia reported the 65th anniversary of the Legion in Croatia was celebrated with a Pilgrimage to the Croatian Martyrs Shrine in Udbina. There was an attendance of 800, which included 11 priests and the retired Bishop of the Diocese. Works done in the Regia area include looking after junior praesidia, home and hospital visitation, crowd contact, visiting war veterans and promoting Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. A praesidium in Zagreb reported 441 people receiving the Sacraments following encouragement by legionaries. The junior Curia in Osijek Comitium has 62 members. In Zagreb South Curia praesidia were set up in two parishes. In Zagreb West Curia 61 persons received the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion following Legion visitation.

CZECH REPUBLIC: Prague Comitium undertakes extension in two Dioceses and in the city of Rakovnik, Slovakia. 23 attended a three-day Retreat and undertook True Devotion to Mary. A summer camp for teenage girls was held. Olmuetz Comitium reported 219 persons received the Sacrament of Reconciliation through hospital visitation. The Comitium, with the help of Hollabrunn Comitium, Austria, is organising a Retreat for street girls. A commemoration Mass was held for Alfie Lambe.

HUNGARY: Budapest Regia reported 61 conversions. Legionaries visit the sick and elderly and help them to receive the Sacraments. Legionaries lead two youth

groups of mentally and physically retarded youth. Legionaries in **Nagybatony Comitium** helped 47 children to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. They organised Pilgrimages to Hungary's National Marian Shrine in which 400 walking pilgrims took part. Two Austrian Senatus representatives visited Budapest Regia.

LATVIA: In **Riga Comitium** legionaries are engaged in home visitation and street contact. The Miraculous Medal is promoted. Legionaries take a special-needs boy to Sunday Mass. A family was prepared for the Sacraments. Rezekne Curia has 10 praesidia and recently started junior praesidia. A public Rosary is held each Friday in June with attendances of 20. One praesidium reported on visiting the sick and housebound and taking four elderly people to Mass each Sunday.

LITHUANIA: In **Kaunas Comitium** visitation to homes, hospitals, and nursing homes is carried out. In their outreach to the homeless the legionaries give out phone numbers of shelters and encourage prayer and return to Mass. The sick, elderly and aged are visited; where necessary works of service are done and visits of the priests arranged. The legionaries are responsible for numerous returns to the Sacraments. A Legion stand erected in a shopping centre in November attracted great attention and Patricians meetings in Kaunas drew large attendances. **Telsiai Comitium** reports 30 of the 90 parishes have the Legion. Due to hospital visitation 65 patients went to Confession and 32 received Anointing of the Sick.

MOLDOVA: All 9 praesidia in **Chisinau Curia** undertake regular recruiting; there are new members in three of the praesidia. Extension is planned for four villages. The legionaries contact the lapsed with the

support of the Parish Priest. Tiraspol praesidium members brought four people to Mass for the first time.

POLAND: **Warsaw Comitium** reports some new praesidia in the Gdansk Region give prospects for erection of a new Curia there. Legionaries from the Comitium take part annually in Peregrinatio Pro Christo to Slovakia. **Warsaw Praga** council reported visiting the sick, street contact, Church work and promoting the Miraculous Medal. In **Lublin Regia** works of evangelisation are taking place in homes, streets, hospitals, parks, in night shelters for addicts, and among alcoholics, cohabiting couples and the homeless. They have contact also with Jehovah Witnesses. Legionaries also prepare children for the Sacraments. Four new praesidia were set up.

ROMANIA: The legionary apostolate in **Satu Mare Regia** consists mainly in visitation of the sick and elderly, and preparing them for the Sacraments; also recitation of the Rosary at Funerals, organising Eucharistic Adoration and helping with the work of Radio Maria.

UKRAINE: Elizabeth Kriss, aided by other Austrian legionaries spent a very fruitful seven weeks in Ukraine: councils were visited; a Summer School was organised; a Peregrinatio Pro Christo was held in Kiev; the Legion was promoted in the Greek Catholic Church and steps were taken to split the African Students' Curia because of high numbers of legionaries. Visits were made to **Zhitomir Comitium**. Five new praesidia and two student Curiae were started in Winnitsa and Harkow. Every parish with the Legion holds a Frank Duff Annual Mass. Translation of Legion literature is on-going.

Thanks to Edel

"Hopeless" illness quickly turns to perfect health after appeal to Edel

Letter from Nigeria: It is with great pleasure and gratitude to God that I report the recovery of my sick brother through the intercession of Edel Quinn. My brother had been hopelessly ill for eight months. he was rushed to five different hospitals. The sickness defied all diagnosis and therapy.

Hope was completely lost and he was finally sent home to the village. As a last resort I persistently prayed to Almighty God and implored Edel Quinn to intercede within three weeks to confirm her saintly life. To my greatest joy, at the end of the third week my brother fully recovered, left the village for Port Harcourt and resumed his job. I strongly pray that God may grant Edel's canonisation and stimulate the faith in the world.

