

Maria Legionis



Our Lady of The Southern Cross



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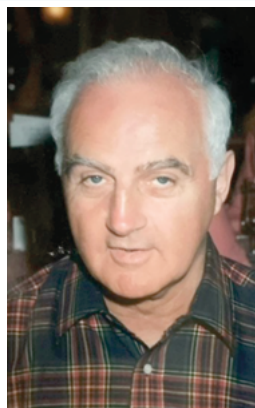
REQUIESCAT

All legionaries and his many friends are saddened with the passing from this life of Brother Paul McKee of Porta Coeli Curia, Portmarnock, Dublin.

For many years Brother Paul was a dedicated Editor of the Maria Legionis.

May his gentle soul rest in peace.

Ar Dheis Dé go Raibh a Anam Uasal.



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ST. COLUMBANUS & PEREGRINATIO PRO CHRISTO

By Assumpta Curia

Columbán - 'the White Dove' ...

is better known by the latinised version as Columbanus and was one of the greatest missionaries of the Early-Irish Church who initiated a revival of spirituality on the European continent, particularly in the Land of the Franks and in the Land of the Lombards.

Columbanus was the first of the great peregrini to leave Ireland's shores, and his example and tradition are continued today by the Legion of Mary when annually many legionaries embark on Peregrinatio Pro Christo (PPC) to Britain and other places in Europe for the purposes of evangelisation.

The following pages give a detailed summary of his life and work and will serve as an inspiration on all legionaries embarking of PPC.



The Legion Handbook states: 'that invisible multitude went forth from their own country and from their kindred and out of their Father's House (Gen. 12.1), and traversed Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries, rebuilding the Faith which the fall of the Roman Empire had brought down with it.' This is the same idealism which prompts teams of legionaries to go annually on Peregrinatio Pro Christo, commonly known as PPC, to bring the Good News that Christ is the Saviour of the world.

Born in 540 in the Kingdom of Royal Meath (now part of the province of Leinster in Ireland), Columbanus left home to study under Abbot Sinell of Cluaninish Monastery on an island in Lough Erne. He then moved to Bangor Abbey where St. Comgall was Abbot. He stayed at Bangor until his fortieth year, at which time Comgall gave him permission to travel to the continent on *Peregrinatio Pro Christo*-a Journey for Christ.



In the Land of the Franks

Gathering twelve companions with him for the journey, they landed in Brittany in the land of the Franks, referred to by the Romans as Gaul, and now present-day France. At St. Malo in Brittany there is erected a granite cross bearing the saint's name, while the near-by village of Saint Colum also commemorates him in name. The advent of Columbanus in Gaul coincided with the election of Gregory as Pope. But unlike the Roman aristocrat who had become Pope Gregory 1, more commonly known as St. Gregory the Great, Columbanus had come from beyond the reaches of the Roman Empire; a man without status or pedigree; and yet by the sheer force of his charisma, would set the Catholic Church upon a new and momentous course. Schooled in the exacting monasticism of his native land, Columbanus appeared to the Franks a figure of awesome holiness. Unlike their-own Frankish monks, he consciously sought out places of wilderness in which to live.

Annegray - Columbanus and his companions were received with favour by King Gontram of Burgundy, and soon they made their way to Annegray where they founded their first monastery in an old Roman fort in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains. In the hills above Annegray, Columbanus found a cave, or cell, to where he would retire to spend time alone with God. "Let no one disparage the benefits of silence unless they grow lax; the secluded life is better than the social." Despite the remoteness of their retreat at Annegray, the place became an attractive pilgrimage site. It attracted so many monastic vocations that two new monasteries had to be formed to accommodate them.

Luxeuil - Columbanus obtained from the king the ancient-abandoned Franco-Roman fortress, some thirteen kilometres from Annegray. There he founded a monastery known as Luxovium in present-day Luxeuil-les-Baine. It was a wild region covered with pine forests and brushwood. Columbanus and his tiny band of followers cleared away trees, drained marshes and built an enclosure. When hungry they would knaw on bark; when weary after a long day of labour they would devote themselves to study and prayer and penance. This exacting routine, far from scaring away would be recruits, was soon attracting them in droves. To enter the monastery enclosure and to submit to the rule of Columbanus was said to know oneself in the company of angels. The discipline imposed on novices was designed, not only to eradicate human pride and self-conceit but, to offer them the hope of Paradise. "Let us, since we are travellers and pilgrims in this world, keep the end of the road always in our minds – for the road is our life and the end is our home."

Not to journey, not to live in exile from the world, was to spurn Heavenly rewards for earthly ones. This was the meaning of his *Peregrinatio Pro Christo*; and when Columbanus preached this message he did so as a man who had literally turned his back on his family and his native land. As a result, he was able to serve his Frankish admirers as a living example of a

life utterly committed to God. Soon Luxeuil monastery became the most important and flourishing monastery in Gaul; its example contributing enormously to the conversion of the inhabitants of Burgundy. Sadly, in 731, years after the death of Columbanus, this great monastery was raided by Islamic-Muslim horsemen, and those who could not escape were put to the sword. The Seed of martyrs is the Life of the Church!

Fontaine Abbey - Columbanus erected a third monastery at present-day Fontaine-les-Luxeuil. These monastic communities remained under the authority of Columbanus and the rules of life within them were in keeping with the Irish monastic tradition in which he had been formed. Miraculous stories were told of Columbanus: of how bears would obey his commands not to steal fruit; and squirrels sit on his shoulders; of how the touch of his saliva would heal wounds; of how his prayers would heal the sick and keep alive the dying.



Fontaine Abbey

Dispute - During his years in Gaul, Columbanus became involved in a dispute with the Frankish bishops who may have feared his growing influence. In keeping with the Irish monastic tradition, Columbanus and his monks calculated the date of Easter in a particular manner, whereas the Frankish bishops had adopted a different method of calculation. The bishops objected to this newcomer's continued observance of their own dating, which also caused the end of Lent to differ. In addition, the bishops complained about the distinct Irish tonsure in practice in his monasteries. In 602 the bishops assembled to judge Columbanus, but he declined to appear before them as requested. Instead, he wrote a letter to them which stated:

I am not the author of this divergence. I came as a poor stranger into these parts for the cause of Christ our Saviour. One thing alone I ask of you, Holy Fathers, permit me to live in silence in these forests near the bones of the seventeen of my brethren now dead.

Columbanus was favoured by kings who recognised authority when they saw it; yet he did not succumb to their requests. When he was asked by the local king to give his blessing to four prince sons who had four different mothers, he refused to do so. The King was incensed and confronted Columbanus at Luxeuil. He ordered Columbanus to conform to the



country's conventions in relation to the date of Easter. He also objected to the practice of the Irish tonsure. When Columbanus refused, he was taken prisoner to Besancon. However, he managed to escape his captors and returned to his monastery at Luxeuil. But when the king became aware of this, he sent soldiers to send him back to Ireland by force. In addition, in order to separate Columbanus from his monks, the king stipulated that only those monks who had accompanied him from Ireland should accompany him into exile.

Columbanus was taken to Nevers, then by boat down the Loire River to the coast. At Tours he visited the tomb of St. Martin. When he arrived at Nantes, and before embarkation, he wrote a letter to his community at Luxeuil. He urged the monks to obey Attala who had stayed behind as Abbott.

From Nantes, Columbanus and his companions then travelled down the Rivers Moselle, Vosges, Rhine and Limmat, until they reached Lake Zurich. They went on to Bregens where Columbanus separated from the most famous of his companions: St. Gaul. He then crossed the Alps and descended into Italy. As he travelled on, he continually sought out wild places inhabited by wolves and pagans. Wherever he stopped, there he would plant a new monastery. Meanwhile, St. Gaul had founded a monastery at Galen. Subsequently, a city grew up around the monastery and is known today as St. Galen in Switzerland.

Bobbio - In 610 Columbanus, with his little band of monks, arrived in Milan and was welcomed by King Agiluef and Queen Theodilenda. The king gave Columbanus a tract of land called Bobbio, situated between Milan and Genoa. Bobbio was close to the Trebia River situated in a narrow pass in the foothills of the Apennine Mountains. Columbanus wanted this secluded place for himself and his monks, and it was here he erected a monastery. From its foundation, Bobbio Abbey followed the strict rule of St. Columbanus based on the monastic practices of Early-Irish Christianity.

The letter concludes:

They tell me the ship is ready. The end of my parchment compels me to finish my letter. Love is not orderly; it is this which has made it confused. Farewell, dear hearts of mine. Pray for me that I may live in God.

Soon after the ship had set sail, violent winds on three occasions blew back the ship on to the mudflats. As a result, Columbanus and his little band of monks were freed by his guards, who had come to fear him more than they did their king. Columbanus and his little company took to the roads again. He felt himself called to serve just as Paul had once served: an agent of change in a dark world. He believed he had a duty to God to save the souls of pagans and to bring the light of Christ to all living in darkness.

Columbanus prepared for death by retiring to his cave on the mountainside, overlooking the Trebia River where, according to tradition, he had dedicated an oratory to Our Lady. And it was here on 21 November in 615 that the greatest-missionary exile of them all, the aged exile from Ireland, finally laid down his earthly life.

Legacy - The legacy of St. Columbanus is impossible to quantify. Legionaries going annually on Peregrinatio Pro Christo draw their inspiration from this legendary Irish monk. His final resting place at Bobbio draws countless visitors each year. Being well versed in the classics, he often resorted to classical usage: he does not mention the Franks but only of Gauls and Gaul, and only once does he refer to the Lombards.

Bobbio Abbey became a centre of resistance to Arianism, and the abbey library, founded by Columbanus with manuscripts he had brought with him from Ireland, and treatises which he personally had written, became one of the greatest libraries of the Middle Ages.



Bobbio Abbey

In 982 Gerbert Aurillac became Abbot and later became Pope Sylvester II.

After his death, stories told of the men and women who submitted to his monastic rule left them in no doubt that he could indeed open the gates of Heaven. In his own lifetime, a dying brother had told him of seeing an angel waiting beside his sick bed and begged the Saint to stop praying as it was serving only to keep the angel at bay. In a nunnery founded by one of his disciples, a sister at the point of death had ordered the candle in her cell snuffed out for “do you not see what splendour approaches; do you not hear the choirs singing?” Stories such as these were told wherever Columbanus or one of his followers had established a foundation; they gave to their monasteries and convents a power and awe that not even the greatest basilicas could equal.

Columbanus was a visionary who believed that the fallen world might be born anew. In his monasteries, he taught an Irish monastic rule and penitential practices for repentant sinners: private individual confession to a priest followed by a penance imposed by the priest confessor.

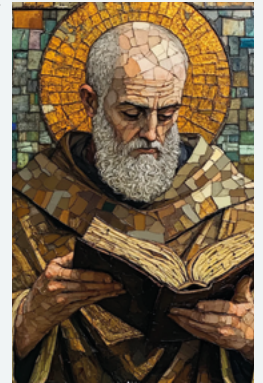
This venerable reassurance that any sinner might be forgiven received the official seal of the Church’s approval: all that was required was a genuine repentance, and even the most obdurate heretic might ultimately be brought to heaven.

In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council convened by Pope Innocent III declared in Canon 21 the famous *Omnis autriusque sexus* which commands that all Christians who have reached the age of discretion should confess his or her sins at least once a year to a priest. This annual and individual confession of sins served to confirm earlier legislation and custom and was an endorsement of the practice followed by Columbanus centuries earlier.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban founded in 1916, and the Missionary Sisters of St. Columban founded in 1924, are both dedicated to St. Columbanus. *In 1950, to commemorate the fourteenth centenary of his birth, a conference was held in Luxeuil where Columbanus had founded his famous monastery. It had been orchestrated by the French-Foreign Minister Robert Schumann, whose historic declaration that same year would mark the foundation of the European Community with which we are familiar today. Also present at this conference were a large group of leading European statesmen and diplomats. It included the Irish Taoiseach John. A. Costello and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Sean McBride, as well as the Papal Nuncio Angelo Roncalli - the future Pope John XXIII. In his address to the conference, John A. Costello said: “All statesmen of today might well turn their thoughts to St. Columbanus and his teaching. History records that it was by men like him that civilisation was saved in the sixth century.”*

The Columban Way: Currently the Columbanus Way is a cultural route that crosses Europe and celebrates the heritage of the Irish Monastic Movement in which St Columbanus and St Gall played an important part. Once completed the Columban Way will become the second-longest pilgrimage route in Europe-after the Camino de Santiago in Spain. The Columbanus Way traces the footsteps of Columbanus from Mount Leinster where

The remains of Columbanus are preserved in the crypt at the abbey in Bobbio. In 1482 the relics were laid in a new shrine and placed beneath the altar of the shrine.



Columbanus is named in the Roman Martyrology on 23 November, which is his Feast Day in Ireland.

he was born in 540 to Bobbio where he died in 615.

In a message to a gathering of Columban Societies held in June 2024, Pope Francis reminded them of the contribution made by Columbanus to the evangelisation of Europe at a time when the first fruits of the Gospel were in danger of being lost during the Dark Ages following the fall of the Roman Empire.

Allocutio

Given at Concilium 19 January 2025

by Fr. Bernardo De Nardo

On Christmas Eve we have started the Jubilee Year. To commemorate 2025 years of the birth of Christ. The Church being the “universal sacrament of salvation” (Ad Gentes 1) for the world, wants to show once again the mercy of God by this outpouring of special grace during the whole year.

The ordinary way in which the Church grants this grace is through the administration of the sacraments, the extraordinary way is through the indulgences we can obtain every day this year. Like in the previous centuries, since the tradition of the Jubilees started, the Church has never stopped showing the world the Merciful Face of the Father Who is always ready to welcome everybody and always forgiving and bringing reconciliation, peace and love.

The Church exists to continue the work of Jesus Christ and his ministry of salvation and



she does that by proclaiming the Good News and welcoming everybody, responding to the commandment of Our Lord’s Last Will, when he ordered his disciples “Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Gospel to all creation” (Mk 16:15). That means, that the main and primary mission of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel, once communities have been established only then begins the mission of welcoming and nurturing those communities.

Before undertaking this mission, the apostles lived with Jesus, were trained by Him, witnessed the miracles He performed and heard His teachings. Finally, they saw the realisation of the love He had for them when He died on the Cross and rose up from the Dead. They knew Jesus, they loved Him.

That knowledge and love was what prompted them to preach the Gospel. We know too that in order to achieve that, they needed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; their human strengths were not enough to enable them to undertake the titanic mission of evangelising the world. As we know very well at Pentecost Our Lady was present for the Coming of the Holy Spirit, and until the moment of her Ascension she continued to be present with the early Church. The physical presence of Our Lady in the early Church, her assistance, her advice and her participation in the work of evangelisation was of tremendous importance, and it is something that actually happened and sometimes we tend to forget.

We are all also disciples of

Christ, and the more we know Him and love Him, the more we want others to know Him and love Him too; we realise that the happiness we experience must be shared. The same happens with Our Blessed Mother; as our love for Her grows and we discover more about Her, we feel prompted to tell it to everybody.

All of us baptised members of the Mystical Body of Christ, take part in the task of evangelisation through our different vocations, and have chosen to do this, in a more specific way taking the way of life proposed by the Legion of Mary. Convinced that the fulfilment of the Legion system will lead us to holiness, we participate in the mission of proclaiming the Good News, through the different apostolates we undertake.



The more we know the Legion of Mary, the life of its founder the Servant of God Frank Duff, his writings and his spirituality, the more we love the Legion. Gradually we are more and more blessed through our Legion membership, and as a natural consequence we feel the necessity to share this with others, and out of love for souls we want more people to become members.

This process of extension of the Legion begins obviously in our own praesidium, making the best efforts to recruit new members, both active and auxiliaries, and continues in our own councils by the formation of new praesidia. This will eventually bring the necessity of establishing new councils. Every new member, every new praesidium and every new council means having more people involved in the work of evangelisation; it means more souls being saved. One of the greatest benefits of being members of the Legion of Mary

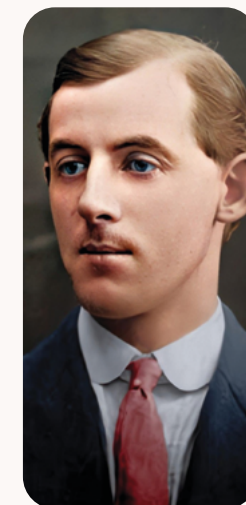


is that it puts us immediately in touch with the rest of the world, keeping the right balance of focusing our work in our places but looking at what happens in the rest of the world. By being members of a praesidium we know that we have a higher council that is in touch with another one in our own area, in our country and eventually with Concilium. That keeps our mission local and our vision universal. We should be all thinking how to reach out to our next parish, diocese and country without the Legion and work to establish it there. We must look around and see how many parishes close to us don't have a Legion praesidium, how many dioceses in our countries don't have any praesidia, how many vast areas don't have any Legion presence; then we must take action and undertake the work of making those parishes, dioceses and countries filled with the joy of the presence of the Legion of Mary.

The beginning of the year and especially this Jubilee Year, gives us an opportunity to plan things, to be aware of the state of the Legion in our own areas and to think about how we are going to spread the Legion in places where it is not present. Referring to planning, in one of his last articles called Widening our Horizons, Frank Duff wrote, "If the Legion could become that much absorbed in the winning of souls, it is certain that the Holy Spirit would fill it with His Power and perhaps convert the world. Actually, this is the petition with which the Legion prayer begins. Therefore, it is not altogether as a joke that I suggest that an atlas of the world might be a companion document to the Handbook." And, in his final address delivered at the Annual Conference of Peregrinatio Pro Christo on 25th of October 1980 he wrote, "can we induce every legionary in this dreaming about souls? If each one could be induced to pray for a minute a day over a map of the world, it would afford an opening for the maternal operations of Mary."

This year the best way to celebrate the Jubilee is by spreading the Legion, by recruiting new members, establishing new praesidia and new councils. Every new legionary is a new Catholic working for his/her own sanctification and irradiating the graces involved in this process with his/her family, friends, colleagues, etc. Every new praesidium is the same but multiplied and even more with every new council being established, the work of evangelization enlarges, and more souls are won. More and more people will become aware of the Mercy of God and will receive the grace prepared for them by receiving the sacraments.

During this year of the Jubilee our main contribution to the life of the Church is to extend the Legion of Mary.



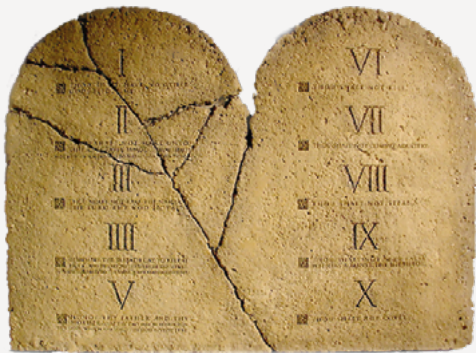
Talk at PPC Conference

2nd NOVEMBER 2024

By Paddy Early

Good afternoon, it's great to be here once again reviewing a successful year of Projects.

The history of our faith is immense, and God is always calling fallen mankind into a deep relationship with Him. Throughout the Old Testament God spoke to us through the prophets and as well as giving us the ten commandments, the books of the Old Testament prefigured the birth of the Saviour.



With the coming of Jesus, history was redefined dramatically. Mankind killed the Saviour thinking they could reject his teachings and his new Church. But as we know, in the 2000 years since, the faith has spread despite many persecutions and heresies. The New Testament is all about Jesus, his apostles and the spreading of the faith. With the graces of the sacraments Jesus has been truly with us ever since. But the numbers of those who claim to be Catholic and yet disbelieve is staggering!

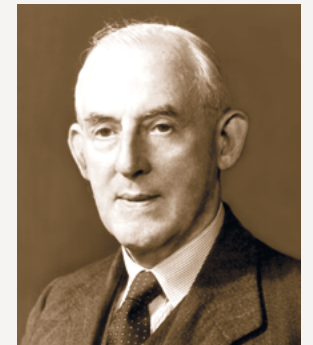
But just as in the Old Testament when mankind is faithful to God, humanity thrives, and huge progress is made. In the past 500 years since the Reformations of Luther and King Henry VIII the Church has endured many serious trials and heresies which have spread from Europe throughout the world.

In this 500-year period God has spoken for the most part through Our Lady. In the period from the Reformation to 1830 Our Lady appeared three times but in the period since 1830 she has appeared twelve times - which is immense compared to all previous periods in our history. Clearly Heaven was screaming at the Church- lay and clergy- about threats and calling people back from apostasy.



As part of these apparitions, she set up two armies in 1917 and 1921. The first the Immaculada of Mary through St. Maxamilian Kolbe and the second the Legion of Mary through Servant of God Frank Duff; and this army of Our lady is the one in which we serve. Clearly God required lay people to help spread the faith as part of our Royal Priesthood. As Frank Duff points out, this deepens our faith and our sanctity.

The history of the Legion in its 100 years existence shows that success



has been huge with millions of members on every continent throughout the world. But like the entire Church, progress has been up and down - especially in the past 40 years. In Ireland it is sadly weak.

For myself, joining the Legion eight years ago and the PPC projects seven years ago have been the greatest blessing of my life. From the moment I heard about the PPC, I was drawn to join, and I have enjoyed each one of the ten with which I have been involved. Working for a busy week with so many dedicated legionaries has taught me so much about evangelising and has given me a deep pride in sharing our precious faith with so many people.



Every army has its special forces, and the Legion is no different! The PPC people are the ones in this army because they are willing to travel abroad and accept conditions which vary greatly from their homes. Then they work a thirteen-hour day in all sorts of weather and pay expenses out of their own pockets. What dedication!

Each project is utterly unique, and each one has its own particular challenges. But the camaraderie and willingness to face any challenge is heart-

warming. My first project was in Middlesbrough in 2017, and Sarah Broadfoot, who has since passed, came with me from Waterford. She had macular degeneration and hearing loss, but her huge experience was a great resource. The project was a real eye opener for me. I was shocked at the total lack of faith in so many. A majority of young people had little knowledge of God, and few even knew if they were baptised. My feeling at the time was that it wasn't as bad in Ireland but now I would not be so sure. Middlesbrough was once a huge heavy-industrial region with great employment, but these jobs had disappeared and there was huge unemployment and social deprivation. We had a good team, and it was a great learning experience for me.

In 2018 I did two projects to different areas of Birmingham - both with Michael Haugh as team leader. In both areas there were huge numbers of muslims and many mosques. Once again, a great learning experience on both projects.

In 2019 I was on two projects: the first to North London as Assistant Leader and the second to St. Helen's in Merseyside on my first project as leader. North London was a mix of poor areas and better off areas. And many apartment blocks. A lovely project and a good team. Merseyside was unusual as we all stayed in a large presbytery as the parish was once run by a religious order. Again, like Middlesbrough, it was a former heavy industrial place but now had huge poverty and social deprivation.

A small enough parish so we did some street contact and houses in an adjoining parish. Fr. Laurence Gambella was our Spiritual Director which was wonderful as he had full access to the Church so we could have Adoration each evening. We had some great encounters and got 24 signed up for RCIA.

Then of course we had the lockdown which stopped projects for two years! Since then, it has been a problem to obtain both



projects and volunteers.

In 2022 I did one project to Wythenshawe, Manchester which was very challenging. Accommodation, places to eat, generally bad facilities and only one Mass in the parish on a Sunday. Before we went there the parish had three priests covering five churches, schools, hospitals, and on the week, we arrived the parish priest had been transferred and an Irish curate was promoted within

the parish. So now they were reduced to two priests and their workload was very full. But we had a great team, including two first timers, and despite the challenges we really enjoyed the project, made some great contacts but would have to wonder at level of follow up! Wythenshawe was a huge social engineering project started in the 1920's but by the time facilities such as shops, churches, schools and transport links were built the place had become an atheist wasteland.

I did two projects in 2023 to Southborough in Kent. Fr. Mark Higgins was parish priest with whom I had worked on the Bermingham projects in 2018. He is a high - energy young priest and fully involved with us as one of our team of twelve had become ill and unable to travel. It was a very productive and enjoyable project.

The second project in 2023 was to Stoke-on-Trent with two excellent 'first timers.' We ended up one member short due to travel difficulties, but we had a great week and Kevin Beirne- a first timer- and Mark McDonagh did huge work in getting a presidium established. Again, a former big pottery place but now with few factories, high unemployment, and social disadvantage. But the



parish was excellent with a very dedicated parish priest.

In 2024 I did two projects: one in Bordon in Hampshire and the other in Inverness, Scotland. Both were excellent but very different projects. Both have been reported on already today. Both parish priests were excellent and very supportive. Bordon is an army base and Fr. John a former army man. Inverness was possibly the most unusual project I have been on as it was a tourist destination, and with street contact every day we met people of all nationalities.

My overall impressions are how broken our societies have become with isolation, family breakdown, loneliness, so few children and little faith or interest in faith which is tragic. This situation is very similar in Ireland now also and points to the huge need for our Legion Apostolate. What you see unfolding is all the tragedies that Our Lady prophesied if our world did not turn back to God. Since the Reformation of the sixteenth century a confusion and rebellion against God has taken place and is now culminating in our own century.

Fr. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) in an article about our future Church predicted huge challenges ahead; he said that the Church would be much smaller with everyone having to do more. A time would come when people would be so full of despair and hopelessness that they would seek out those who are enlightened by a deep faith and



resilience in the face of massive attacks against the faith. This is borne out in Our Lady's prophesies and warnings. Of course, anyone who has read Frank Duff's writings will

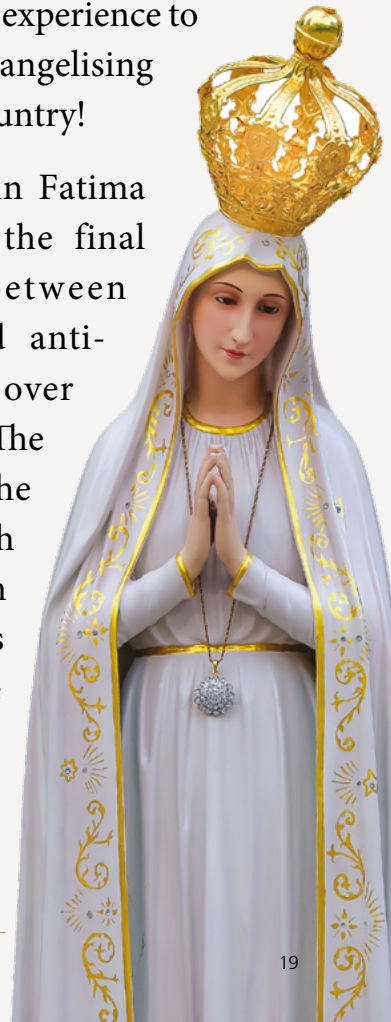
be aware that he also foresaw such outcomes. We are in a most challenging period when totalitarian forces seek to enslave mankind in an aggressive godless and barren world.

I'm sure we all recognise the challenges and attacks against the faith are very intense right now. The loss of faith in Ireland over the recent decades is disappointing. Since the

lockdown numbers of projects and numbers of volunteers are well down so it's very difficult to project how will it develop in the years to come.

As far as we should be concerned, we should go on doing these projects for as long as possible because every soul saved is a great victory in this satanic war against Jesus and His Church. Even if projects become scarce, we have the experience to get busy evangelising our own country!

Our Lady in Fatima predicted, the final battle between Christ and anti-Christ is over the family. The family is the first Church and when it breaks down the parish goes into decline and society collapses.





Ireland in particular has been targeted in the past twenty years or so because secularism wishes to collapse countries which were once strongly Catholic. As a nation we have forgotten our history of oppression and genocide over several centuries. But given Ireland's proud spiritual traditions it has huge potential once again to be a shining light to the whole world and the Legion has to be at the forefront of efforts to revive our

faith. But maybe we all need to deepen our faith to endure, testing everything by the light of the Holy Ghost.

Our Constitution was given to us by our forefathers in 1937. The Preamble to our Constitution is like a treatise on life! Our politicians and media just act as if it were not there, but many of you may not be aware of it either? If you don't own a copy of the Constitution, I suggest you should buy one.

"In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred. We the people of Eire, humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, ..."

So, our job as followers of Jesus and members of the Legion is to stand firmly for truth - even if it means suffering dry or wet persecution! Jesus has told us that if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before His Father!

We must remember the words given to us in the closing Tessara prayer: *"a courageous faith which will inspire us to undertake and carry out without hesitation great things for your glory and for the salvation of souls; a faith which be our Legion's Pillar of Fire- to lead us forth united- to*

kindle everywhere the fires of Divine Love-...."

Our forefathers endured horrendous suffering for centuries and now it's our time to stand firm against anything that may contradict the law of God.

Our Lady has promised us that her Immaculate Heart will triumph, and we know that God is always faithful. But will God find each one of us faithful?

The only thing worth living for and the only thing worth dying for is the Truth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

EXPLANATION OF FRONT AND BACK COVERS – *The Editor*



OUR LADY OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

The title of 'Southern Cross' derives from the constellation of stars seen only from the southern hemisphere. Mary is the Help of Christians as she leads all people to her Son. She is our help and our advocate.

THE ANNUNCIATION

In the Gospel of Luke the Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and bear a son and she must call him Jesus. Mary asked: 'But how can this come about since I am a Virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you' the angel answered 'and so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.' (Luke 1:26-38).



A Child's Vision

What did you see in the rays of the sun, laddie

What did you hear on the wind?

I saw Christ wounds in the rays of the sun

And I heard His cry on the wind.

And what did he say, laddie

What did the Crying Christ say:

To a world deaf and dumb

He spoke loud and clear

That many are on the wrong road

And warned that chastisement is near.

But his mother will come with one final call

To this world that betrayed Christ and sold.

In scripture we read in Genesis 3

The victory of Mary foretold.

FH



Saint Damasus I the 37th Pope

(HIS TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS)

By Michael Walsh



Saint Damasus was born in Portugal in 304 AD. Damasus grew up in Rome in the service of the Church of the Martyr Saint Laurence. He was elected Pope in October, 366, by a vast majority, but a number of dissenters rejected him. Instead they chose the deacon Ursinus and had him irregularly made Pope. However, following a double election, Damasus successfully fought the faction instigated by his rival Ursinus. This resulted in disobedience, violence and false accusations against Damasus in order to seat Ursinus as Pope. Eventually, the litigants were excommunicated by a Roman synod of forty-four bishops.

This was a time of turbulence and vigilance for the Catholic Church: the new Pope facing obstacles such as ongoing

heresies and other hazards during his Pontificate. Heresies were rife in the fourth century and a short time into his reign the new Pontiff convened synods to deal with them: In Roman synods (368 and 369), after long discussions with the Bishops, he condemned the following heresies: (1) Apollinarianism, which is a Christological heresy proposed by Apollinaris of Laodicea which argues that Jesus had a human body and sensitive human soul. (2). Macedonianism, is a 4th-century heresy that denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, claiming that the Spirit was a created being.

The Roman synod of 374, included a canon of the New Testament being proclaimed by Pope Damasus I.

This proclamation was brought about when Saint Basil of Caesarea called on the help of



Damasus against Arianism. (The heresy denying the divinity of Christ,

originated with the Alexandrian priest Arius (250 – 336) who maintained that the son of God was created by the Father and therefore neither coeternal nor consubstantial with the Father. Auxentius, the Arian Bishop of Milan, was excommunicated, and replaced by St. Ambrose, a native of Cappadocia. Arianism was condemned at the Synod.

In 380, the heretic Priscillian, was condemned by the Council of Saragossa after unsuccessfully appealing to the Pontiff. The council of Saragossa was composed of Spanish and Aquitanian bishops who adopted eight canons bearing more or less directly on the heresy of Priscillianism. (Priscillianism was a Christian sect developed in the Roman province of Hispania in the 4th century by Priscillian.

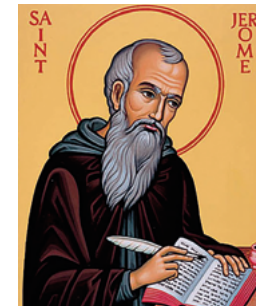
It is derived from the Gnostic doctrines.

In 381, three years before his death, Pope Damasus I called a Church Council in Constantinople which would come to be known as the Second Ecumenical Council. This council condemned all forms of Arian doctrines by reaffirming the doctrinal statement, or creed, which had been proclaimed at the Nicene Council. The Council enacted four disciplinary canons: against the Arian heresy and its sects (can. 1), on limiting the power of bishops within fixed boundaries (can. 2), on ranking the see of Constantinople second to Rome in honour and dignity (can. 3), on the condemnation of Maximus, Bishop of Constantinople and his followers.

The many other achievements of Pope Damasus I included the following: he restored his own church (San Lorenzo in Damaso) and provided for the suitable housing of the Church archives in Rome; he built a baptistry at the Vatican in honour of Saint Peter and set up at that location

one of his artistic inscriptions (Carmen xxxvi), still visible in the Vatican crypts; he drained the subterranean area so that the bodies buried there might not be affected by overflowing or still water.

Pope Damasus I composed hymns, and a number of works on martyrs and saints. He introduced Saint Jerome to undertake his revision of the earlier Latin versions of the



Vulgate Bible. (Saint Jerome was confidential secretary to Damasus I).

Saint Jerome says (Ep. xxii, 22) that Damasus I wrote on virginity, both in prose and in verse, but no such work has been preserved. He also said of Damasus I that he was “an incomparable person, learned in the scriptures, a virgin doctor of the virgin Church, who loved chastity and heard its praises with pleasure.”

Quote from ‘The Decree of Damasus I’: “The arrangement of the names of Christ, however,

is manifold: Lord, because He is Spirit; Word, because He is God; Son, because He is the only begotten Son of the Father; Man, because He was born of the Virgin...”

After eighteen turbulent but successful years in the Papacy, Pope Damasus I passed away in Rome in AD384 after living through and solving many problems while bravely dealing with challenges to the Papacy.

This hard-working Pontiff left an indelible stamp on the 4th Century and deserves a prestigious place in ecclesiastical history for his remarkable achievements as 37th Pontiff of the Catholic Church.

In dealing with contemporary problems and issues, legionaries may well take inspiration from this remarkable Pope in the manner with which he dealt decisively with the problems of his age.

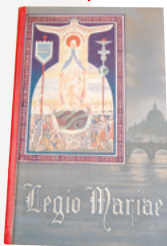
**THE FEAST DAY OF POPE
DAMASUS FALLS ON
11 DECEMBER.**

Concilium Centenary Talk

Given at Concilium 17th November 2024

By Paddy Fay

The Handbook of the Legion of Mary states: "In the Legion, Mary is Queen. She it is who summons her legionary hosts to their glorious warfare and commands them in the field, inspires them, and personally leads them on to victory. It is a natural step from the Queen to her special council, or "Concilium," which would represent her visibly and share her superintendence of all the other legionary governing bodies."(28:1:18)



The Legion of Mary started shortly after Frank Duff and others had discussed the True Devotion to Mary, as taught by St. Louis Marie de Montfort. The first branch of the Legion of Mary at its foundation on 7 September 1921 in Myra House, Francis Street, Dublin, was given the title Our Lady of Mercy. The Sancta Maria Hostel was opened in 1922 and this led to the start of a second branch which had the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This was changed to Sancta Maria later. The branches were known as patronages belonging to the Association of Our Lady of Mercy. The



name Legion of Mary was adopted on 15 November 1925. In 1924 there were four patronages functioning, all of them based in Myra House. These were all composed of women. The Legion Handbook says: "The Legion came into existence as an organisation of women" and it adds "women have thus the place of honour in the organisation" (13:16). Frank Duff, the Founder of the Legion, was present at their meetings to guide them. At some stage, some men, members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, were appointed to attend meetings as Tribunes to provide help with such things as information on welfare services. The opening of the Morning Stat Hostel for men in 1927 led to men joining the Legion.

In 1924, it was decided to set up a central council. Its first meeting was on 2nd November 1924 in Myra House. The first meeting and many subsequent meetings were also held in Myra House. The first President elected was Mrs. Elizabeth Kirwan, who was the first President of the first praesidium. She was born in New Zealand and came to Ireland at a young age. The first Spiritual Director was Fr. Michael Creedon.

In 1925, the first praesidium outside Myra House was set up in the St. Vincent de Paul Centre, Ozanam House, in Mountjoy Square, Dublin. The organisation was beginning to spread. The first praesidium outside Dublin was started in Waterford in 1927. The following year a beginning was made in Glasgow, Scotland, and the year after in London. In 1930, the Regina Coeli Hostel opened in Dublin. It is good to recall that during the 1920's the infant Legion was engaged in a remarkable street rescue apostolate in "Bentley Place" in Dublin. A great many women were rescued and a whole area was cleared of an evil which had lasted many years. Frank Duff has told the story of this venture in his book *Miracles on Tap*.

Several changes occurred during those early years including the adoption of Latin terms such as Praesidium, Concilium, and Acies in December 1930. In 1931 it was decided to have the Allocutio in the middle of Legion meetings rather than at the end. The Legionary Promise was approved in March 1933. The Opening Legion Prayers and Rosary began to be recited in Latin at the Concilium meetings in the late 1960's. The first Legion Handbook was written in the 1920's.

Frank Duff was elected President in 1930. The following legionaries also served as presidents in the course of the years: Jack Nagle, John Murray, John Gavin, Jimmy Cummins, Enda Dunleavy, Sam Hughes, Paddy

Fay, Aileen O'Donoghue, who was the second woman to be elected President, Sile Ni Chochl ain, Tommy McCabe, Mary Murphy and the current President, Declan Lawlor. Concilium officers' meetings were very important to the functioning of the Concilium. Many things had to be attended to between meetings such as looking after the Comitia and Curiae in Dublin and Ireland, as they were directly attached to the Concilium, printing and sales of literature, sales of Vexilla, the Concilium Bulletin, visitors and Summer Schools. All who served as Concilium officers, in whatever office or offices they served, deserve many thanks.

The following were among the Spiritual Directors of the Concilium in the course of the years: Fr. Michael Creedon, Fr. Michael Toher, An t'Athair, Donnacha O'Floinn, Fr. Thomas O'Flynn, C.M., Fr. Michael Browne, Fr. Joseph Moran, O.P., Fr. Bede McGregor, O.P., and currently, Fr. Paul Churchill. We owe a great debt of gratitude to all of them.

The 1930's saw quite an expansion of the Legion with foundations in the U.S.A. and Africa and other countries. Legion Envoys were sent out. These included Mary Duffy, the first Envoy, in 1934, and later, John Murray and Una O'Byrne, all three to North America, financed by an American businessman, Bartley Oliver.

Venerable Edel Quinn was sent to East Africa in 1936. Over the next 77 years 95 Envoys were sent out. It is good to recall that during the 1930's the Concilium had the responsibility for three hostels in Dublin as well as care for the growing Legion in Ireland, including Dublin, which had 60 praesidia and about 1,700 legionaries in 1930. In 1933, an Acies in Whitefriar Street Church had an attendance of 1,800 members. Governing councils were set up in several countries, including Ireland. The question of governance in Dublin must have loomed large. As the Legion grew the numbers attending the Concilium grew. The Concilium meetings were held in many venues, including Myra House, Mater Dei in the Regina Coeli Hostel, the Dominican College in Eccles Street, the Archbishop Byrne Hall, the Mansion House, and St. Joseph's, Rathmines. It moved to Nazareth Hall in November 1973 and is still here after 51 years. In March 1938, there were 129 praesidia in Dublin and there was an attendance of 379 at the Concilium meeting. It was decided to set up six Curiae in Dublin in May 1938. Later more Curiae were set up. There were ten Curiae in Dublin in 1945. With the work of the Envoys and the growth of the Legion abroad governing councils were set up in many places. This brought up the importance of correspondence between these councils and the Concilium. Correspondence down the years, under the mantle of Mary,

has contributed greatly to creating bonds between the councils and the Concilium and helping to preserve the unity of the Legion throughout the world. Great thanks are due to the correspondents, for their letters and for their participation in the Concilium meetings. The Maria Legionis started publication in 1937, which helped to provide much information for both active members and in a special way for auxiliary members.

For many years, the Concilium office was located in two rooms upstairs in the Regina Coeli Hostel, close to the Oratory. Due to a lack of space the Legion files were stored in Frank Duff's house. Shelves were installed in a room (the Museum room) upstairs. When the premises, which now house the Concilium office were restored, the office moved there.

When the extension was built which contains the kitchen and literature room downstairs, the upstairs section was used for filing, and the files were transferred to it. In the early 2000's the Concilium office premises and the Regina Coeli and Morning Star Hostels, which were held on lease were passed over to the Legion by the Civil Authorities. This was a very important and welcome development.

Many visitors came to the Concilium over the years and many summer schools were held. The Concilium also sent legionaries to visit councils and some went on Extension work for varying periods of time.

Legion Congresses organised by Curiae started in 1939. The Concilium used to send teams to the Congresses around the country. Frank Duff took part in many of these. The Concilium also sent officers to Rome on occasion. Frank Duff met several Popes, and was invited to attend the final session of the Second Vatican Council, where he received a wonderful expression of appreciation from the great assembly of Bishops. Another special visit to Rome took place in 1979 not too long after Saint Pope John Paul II was elected Pope. Frank Duff, Enda Dunleavy, Jimmy Cummins and Lily Lynch formed the Legion delegation. They were invited to attend the Pope's Mass in his private Chapel and to have breakfast with him afterwards. On the occasion of the Legion Centenary, Mary Murphy, Concilium President, who had met Pope Francis in Rome on one occasion, was nominated to become a Member of the Pontifical Marian Academy International (PAMI) in honour of the great work done by the Legion in the past 100 years by the founders and by the members. Just this year, the Centenary year of the Concilium, the President, Declan Lawlor, and the Secretary, Miriam McKane, attended a Conference in Rome, where they met Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, who expressed his great regard for the Legion. They were privileged to be presented to the Holy Father Pope Francis, to whom they gave a copy of the Legion Handbook in Spanish.

There were many new forms of apostolate which rose up in the Legion in the course of the years: These included the Book barrow apostolate, the apostolate to non-Catholics, the Mercier Society, the Pauline Circle, the Pillar of Fire, the Patricians, True Devotion to the Nation, the Peregrinatio Pro Christo, the Viatores Christi, which became a separate organisation, the Incolae Mariae, Maria et Patria and Deus et Patria.

The Concilium had to deal with some difficult times over the years. The Second World War, the persecution in China, and more recently the Covid pandemic, come to mind. The deaths of Venerable Edel Quinn in 1944, at the age of 37, of Alfie Lambe in 1959, aged 26, and the Founder of the Legion, Frank Duff in 1980 at the age of 91, were occasions of sadness; however, the opening of their Causes for Canonisation were occasions for joy. It is good to remember in our prayers all those who have gone before us. There were always plenty of problems to be considered by the Concilium and many decisions to be made. However, Frank Duff said the Legion was always in the hands of Our Lady and would continue to be in her hands. We are privileged to be called to serve Mary Our Queen in her special council, the Concilium, to further the growth of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Apparition of the Blessed Virgin in Gietrzwałd

By Michael Walsh

(THE ONLY APPROVED MARIAN APPARITION IN POLAND)

Our Lady of Gietrzwałd Marian Shrine attracts almost one-million pilgrims annually to Gietrzwałd, a village in Warmia, northeastern Poland. The Shrine, also known as 'Mother of God' is associated with the apparition which took place from June to September in 1877; it has the distinction of being the only approved Marian apparition in Poland.

The approval of this apparition, which yielded a number of conversions and healings, was granted on 1st September, 1977 by Bishop Jozef Drzazga, Diocese of Warmia. Cardinal Karol Wojtyła presided over the formal approval of the apparition, shortly before he became Pope John Paul II, on the 16th October 1978, the 263rd successor to Saint Peter.

The first apparition took place on June



27, 1877, when a thirteen-year-old girl named Justyna Szafryńska reported that while praying the Angelus she saw a woman seated on a gold throne near a maple tree, accompanied by an angel. The following day, she experienced another apparition; this time also with the Christ Child. Three days after the first event, both Justyna and twelve-year-old Barbara Samulowska witnessed Mary, and Justyna asked: "What do you want, Holy Mary?" The Lady answered in the local Polish dialect: "I want you to pray the Rosary daily." During an apparition the next day, Justyna asked: "Who are You", and Mary replied: "I am the Blessed Virgin Mary of Immaculate Conception."

In subsequent visions, among the questions to the Blessed Virgin by Justyna were: "Whether the Church in the Kingdom of Poland would be freed and orphaned parishes in southern Warmia would have priests again?"

Mary promised that fervent prayer would be able to end the persecutions of Catholic Poles that had occurred under Kulturkampf, and parishes would regain priests. The apparitions continued for almost three months. On September 8, 1877, about a week before the apparition ended, the Blessed Virgin blessed a spring of water, from which pilgrims have consequently reported healings.

Pilgrims started coming to Gietrzwałd in increasing numbers and on the day of the final apparition (16th September), when a statue of the blessed Virgin was blessed and put in the chapel; about 5,000 pilgrims were present at the blessing.

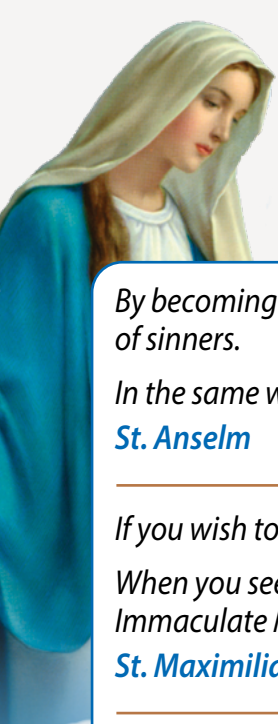
As is the case in many other parts of the world, devotion to the Blessed Virgin is remarkable in Poland, going back through the centuries. In relation to Gietrzwałd, this characteristic is evident in the fact that the image of Our Lady of Gietrzwałd on the main altar in the church dates from around 1583 when Bishop Marcin Kromer described it as 'miraculous' in his Diocesan Chronicles. The Blessed Virgin is depicted as wearing a dark-blue gown, holding Baby Jesus. Two angels clasp a banner stating: "Ave Maria Caecolorum, Ave Maria Angelorum."

Concerning the follow-up story of the chief visionary in Gietrzwałd, in 1884, Justyna Szafryńska entered the

Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul novitiate in Paris aged 20, in 1884, in the chapel where Our Blessed Lady had revealed the Miraculous Medal to Cathrine Labore, and five years later, Justyna made her solemn vows, taking the religious name Stanisława. From Paris, she was sent on missionary work to Guatemala. Apart from short interludes in France and Poland she would spend almost all the rest of her life working with the poor of Antigua and Guatemala. She died in Guatemala in 1950. Her process of beatification was concluded on the diocesan level in 2006, earning her the title: 'Servant of God' and her Cause is now in Rome.

While praying the Angelus on June 27, 1877, when she witnessed a woman seated on a gold throne near a maple tree, accompanied by an angel, Justyna Szafryńska could hardly have imagined that seven years later she would join the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul; spend a good portion of her life on missionary work in Antigua and Guatemala; a Basilica Minor would be built in honour of Our Lady of Gietrzwałd, and the apparition first experienced in June 1877 would become the only approved Marian apparition in Poland.





Praises of Mary



By becoming the Mother of God, Mary was the means of the salvation of sinners.

In the same way, sinners are saved by proclaiming her praises.

St. Anselm

If you wish to live supernaturally and holily, pray to the Mother of God.

When you see yourself becoming lost in activity, make contact with our Immaculate Mother by frequent interior appeals.

St. Maximilian Kolbe

May each one of us possess the soul of Mary to proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

And may each one of us possess the spirit of Mary to rejoice in God.

St. Ambrose

To other human beings, grace has been given with measure.

But to Mary, it has been poured out beyond measure

St. Sophronius

Since the Redeemer pre-existed, there had to be someone to be saved so that He would not come in vain.

As a consequence, we find Mary, the obedient Virgin, saying: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

St. Irenaeus

The Name of Mary is second in blessings only to the Most Sacred Name of Jesus.

There is no other name in heaven or on earth that brings such grace, and hope, and sweetness to the devout.

St. Alphonsus Liguori



Legion world news



SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: In the **Buenos Aires Senatus** a group of legionary brothers carry out a mission to men on the streets late at night and a group of legionary sisters do contact work in a very dangerous area. The annual online symposium for the beatification of Alfie Lambe has invited legionaries from all Spanish-speaking Councils.

Salta Senatus: Thousands of pilgrims travel each year for the Feast of Our Lady of the Miracle. Legionaries meet and help those who arrive by preparing them for the sacraments. Bolivian immigrants are helped prepare for their annual fiesta of the Virgen of Urkupiña.

Corrientes Regia: A praesidium in the Marian Shrine town of Itatí carries out various works including visiting homes to invite people to join in the Novena to Our Lady of Itatí. **Rosario Regia:** A parish priest asked for the Legion of Mary to be established since he discovered there were many Marian apostolic people in the parish. The Regia called a meeting and 32 men and women attended, all of them very interested.

Bolivia: Senatus of La Paz: A praesidium annual report showed 2,500 street contacts. Non-Legionaries are invited to attend the annual Legion of Mary Retreat as a means of recruiting new members.

Brazil: Reports to **Belo Horizonte Senatus** show visits to families and to the sick at home and in hospital. Holy Communion is brought to many sick and elderly people. The Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary in homes is undertaken. **Ponta Grossa Senatus** reports works include visitation of hospitals and nursing homes and bringing Holy Communion to the sick. The **Recife Senatus**

reports graces received by the legionary

apostolate included 11 families returned to the Church, 48 couples received the Sacrament of Matrimony, and a Protestant family converted to Catholicism. The Senatus founded seven senior and four youth praesidia. A report from a Regia attached to **Rio de Janeiro Senatus** shows visitation of Protestants, the lapsed and the sick. An elderly lady with sight impairment was evangelised and received her First Holy Communion, and a young lady from an Evangelical family became a Catholic and a legionary, following a legionary visit. Legionaries in **Salvador Senatus** visited lapsed Catholics, atheists, Protestants, spiritist and Buddhist homes, as well as homes, hospitals, hostels, schools and shopping centres. They prepared children, young people and adults for the sacraments. **Aracaju Regia** reported thirty people, accompanied by the Spiritual Director, made the Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary, according to St. Louis Grignion de Montfort. **Santa Maria Senatus:** Reports show visitation of homes, elderly homes and retirement homes. Holy Communion was brought to patients at home and in hospitals and nursing homes. **São Luis Senatus** reported nearly 5,000 visits were made with 1,705 revisits to families with problems, non-Catholics, the bereaved, the sick at home, the elderly and others. Holy Communion was brought to the elderly. **São Paulo Senatus:** The 21st June 2024 was the 65th Anniversary of the establishment by Concilium of the São Paulo Senatus as the first Senatus in Brazil and the first in the Portuguese-speaking world. **Brasilia Regia:** In July the Regia hosted a youth gathering.

Chile: Several new praesidia have been started in the **Senatus of Santiago**. Street people are spoken with on a weekly basis.

Colombia: Legionaries in the **Senatus of Bogotá** made contacts in a hospital outpatients department, and in shopping centres encouraging parents to enrol their children in catechism classes. They hold 'Prayer Campfires' in parks inviting the passers-by to join in the prayer.

Ecuador: In the **Senatus of Quito** True Devotion to Mary is promoted, in addition to the solid active work being done. An Exploratio Dominicalis project was programmed to take place on August 20.

Paraguay: Over 1,000 people attended the 21st National Conference of Young legionaries organised by the **Senatus of Asuncion**.

Peru: Reports from the **Senatus of Lima** show works include home visitation including those of families in conflict, street contact, handing out literature, visiting the sick in homes and hospitals, catechesis of children with special needs, their parents and godparents, and those preparing for marriage. They visit three prisons, two for men and one for women. There is a praesidium of men in one of the prisons.

Uruguay: Works undertaken in the **Senatus of Montevideo** include visiting nursing homes, hospitals, family homes, sick people, doing street contact, and outreach to young people.

Venezuela: The **Senatus of Caracas** reports works include returns to the sacraments, sometimes after many years, teaching catechism and assisting families so that many babies are baptised.

AFRICA

Angola: **Senatus of Benguela.** Works reported include home and hospital visits. Recruitment drives resulted in 80 new members across four Curiae. A new Comitium was established. The cause of Servant of God Frank Duff is widely promoted through leaflet distribution.

Cape Verde Regia: Works undertaken include visits to migrant families, promoting the sacraments, activities for the elderly, teaching skills like sewing, and reaching out to marginalised individuals including alcoholics and drug addicts. Seven Exploratio Dominicalis projects were undertaken.

Egypt: Great efforts are being made in several areas to establish new senior and junior praesidia. A praesidium in Ismailia organised a spiritual day with Franciscan nuns at Azbat George. It is hoped that a new praesidium can be established there.

Ghana: Senatus of Accra: Several councils organised a novena in preparation for the Feast of the Assumption, with strong attendances each day. On the feast day itself, two councils each had attendances of about one thousand

Guinea Bissau: The 57th anniversary of the Legion in Guinea Bissau was celebrated. Legionaries visit families in their homes, the sick and migrants. Prayers were requested for the late Brother António Gomes, president of the Comitium of Guinea-Bissau, who passed away on 1 November, R.I.P.

Lesotho: The recent report highlights a variety of works, including visits to families, patients, the elderly, prisons, and lapsed Christians. The Brown Scapular is used as a means of evangelisation. One devoted elderly legionary, despite being housebound, offered to teach prayers to children from her home. One legionary joined the Diaconate.

Mozambique: Maputo Regia held a vigil to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. The annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Namaacha took place in October. Tete Comitium celebrated the Legion of Mary's anniversary on September 7 and 8. The event featured Holy Mass, talks and prayers led by Bishop Dom Diamantino. Beira Comitium

reported an outdoor event in the Diocese of Chimoio provided an opportunity for legionaries to come together and engage with one another.

South Africa: Cape Town Senatus Several praesidia marked Our Lady's birthday on 8 September with various celebrations. A Curia, conducted a range of activities, including visits to bereaved families, street evangelisation, Catechism and preparation for baptism classes, Faith formation sessions, and organising of a Marian concert in October. **Matatiele Comitium:** Co-habiting couples are encouraged to receive the sacrament of marriage. Retreats and Exploratio Dominicalis were organised. As a result of their efforts, they report 25 children were baptised, 45 received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion, and two lapsed Catholics returned to the sacraments.

OCEANIA

Australia: A Vietnamese Comitium attached to **Melbourne Senatus** has 200 members. Catechism is taught to new converts and follow-up is done. The Legion of Mary in Tasmania celebrated its 90th Anniversary. Two Senatus officers attended the celebrations. The Korean Comitium attached to **Sydney Senatus** has 266 active members. Contacts are made with non-believers and other faiths. Fifteen joined for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and ten were baptised. 38 lapsed people returned to the Church.

New Zealand: Auckland Senatus made a visit in March 2024 to Tonga Island in the South Pacific, where the Legion had closed down. Four praesidia were set up and a new Curia was established in September. Cardinal Mafi was very supportive of the restarting of the Legion there.

ASIA

Armenia: A praesidium was set up from a

women's group after Fr. Hovsep, the new curia Spiritual Director explained to them about the Legion of Mary. Works included visitation of the sick at home and teaching children how to say the Rosary and make Rosary beads. Another praesidium visited 23 families and helped prepare a number of people to receive the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion.

Holy Land: Among works mentioned were consecration of homes, visitation of the sick at home and in hospital, and visiting the elderly.

Hong Kong: Works reported on at the Regia included visits to men's and women's prisons. An officers' formation day was held at which some legionaries from Macau were present.

India: Kerala Senatus: Hospital visitation features largely in reports. Patients of all faiths are contacted, especially those who have no visitors. A legionary spent four days accompanying one such patient. Recent minutes show attempts to reach out to non-Catholics resulting in some conversions. One Comitium report recounted how twelve youths who were living an un-Christian life were persuaded by legionaries to amend their ways. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is promoted widely and one Comitium recorded Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 6,227 homes over the period of a year. **Chennai Senatus:** Archbishop George Antonysamy celebrated Mass with 22 priests to mark the raising of the Regia to Senatus. 2,000 attended. Twelve lapsed returned to practice and one Hindu became Catholic. A Frank Duff prayer group was set up. **Karnataka Senatus:** A Curia reported sick people are visited at home and in hospital, and counselling is conducted. **Mumbai**

Senatus: Two Senatus officers visited Nepal in June. The Handbook is being translated into the Marathi language. A Spiritual Directors' Conference, the first of its kind, was held in Delhi with the Archbishop and 16 Spiritual Directors present, representing 23 parishes. It was an occasion of great faith and fellowship. **Vishakhapatnam Regia:** Cancer patients, prisons, and families of deceased are visited. Catechism is widely taught.

Indonesia: Legionaries in **Kupang Senatus** are involved in parish activities and also undertake prison and hospital visitation. A Comitium in **Jakarta Senatus** has two praesidia in the university and four in the Seminary. Following prison visitation, two inmates expressed a desire to be baptised. Tanjung Curia has nine senior and nine junior praesidia attached. This is located in a rural area and the praesidia are dispersed throughout the area.

Japan: A praesidium in **Osaka Senatus** visit the elderly, bring invalids to church, and maintain the church building. Another praesidium keep in contact with their adjutorian and auxiliary members by sending them handmade cards, which are joyfully received.

Korea: A Comitium attached to Seoul Senatus reported positive results from the distribution of the parish bulletin and talking to contacts made. These included returns to the sacraments and the gaining of both active and auxiliary members. The support given by legionaries to bereaved families including non-Catholics has led to conversions and returns to practice. In **Gwangju Senatus** a Comitium reported that as a result of legionary visitation to new apartment blocks 99 people were enrolled

in catechism class, 57 were baptised, 359 returned to the sacraments and many active and auxiliary members were gained. A curia in a rural area promoted membership by getting involved in environmental activities such as clearing up rubbish. Works reported to **Daegu Senatus** included contact with the lapsed and non-Catholics leading to returns to the sacraments and baptisms.

Lebanon: Two summer camps for children were organised by the Legion of Mary. 70 children from five to seventeen years of age took part. The praesidium in Beirut visited homes of the poor, people living on the streets and the sick.

Malaysia: Praesidia in **Kuala Lumpur Regia** reported the recitation of the Rosary at wakes and funerals including wakes for non-Catholics.

Myanmar: 125 attended a retreat organised by one Curia at which the Archbishop gave the homily. Civil war continues in parts of the country and this causes disruption to meetings.

Phillippines: In **Cebu Senatus** works include jail and home visitation, crowd contact, supervision of the junior praesidia and teaching catechism at schools. Two Protestants and two others converted to the Catholic Faith. The Major Seminary Curia in **Bicolandia Senatus** has 12 praesidia. They conduct radio apostolate, visit the nursing home and have taken part in a three week Peregrinatio Pro Christo project to a mission territory which included preparing adults for baptism and helping with the facilitation of Church marriages. In **Mindanao Senatus** 246 adults were taught the Catechism as a first step in preparation for Baptism. Cagayan de Oro Regia celebrated "Legion Awareness Month" in July with activities of recruitment, home visitation, book-barrow apostolate and

distribution of prayers for the three Legion Causes A praesidium prepared 21 children and three adults for baptism, seven people were prepared for Confirmation and eight children prepared for First Holy Communion. **Northern Philippines Senatus** reported the 2nd Young Adults' Conference was held on 19 October for 17-35 year-olds. The Frank Duff anniversary Mass was held on 9 November in Manila Cathedral. Two Born again Christians and two from the Iglesia Ni Kristo were baptised. In Kalookan West, a Spiritual Directors' event was attended by a bishop and 22 priests. A Comitium in **Western Visayas Senatus** organised collective weddings for a total of 42 couples. Another Comitium taught Catechism to 1,629 children in public schools. Others reported on home visitations, and sick people visited at home and in hospital, Peregrinatio Pro Christo projects, and Exploratio Dominicalis.

Singapore: The university praesidia held interfaith dialogue events during which Miraculous Medals were distributed. Forty juniors attended a Day of Reconciliation. Legionaries teach English and Catechism to domestic workers.

Sri Lanka: Lapsed Catholics are returning to practice, people are being instructed for the sacraments, and the sick are visited at home and in hospitals.

Taiwan: A Curia is in the process of establishing two new praesidia. It has also started a prison ministry which is progressing well. The annual Legion of Mary Retreat, held in June, attracted so many legionaries that it had to be held over three sessions.

Thailand: Bangkok Senatus: The campaign for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in homes during 2023-2025 is very much in action. The legionaries always

receive full cooperation from priests with this work. Every council has been invited by Senatus to set up a Frank Duff prayer meeting. A couple have returned to the sacrament of matrimony, after a ten-year follow-up by legionaries. Furthermore, the husband has converted and become Catholic. The Centenary of the Thai Mission's consecration to our Blessed Lady was celebrated on 15th August.

Vietnam: Children and adults are prepared for the sacraments, arrangements are made for Church marriages, and the lapsed are invited back to practice.

EUROPE

Austria: Reports from the **Senatus of Austria** show works include the preparation of older children for baptism, and *Patricians* meetings with an attendance of 20 to 30. The Salzburg Curia had a recruiting drive in Wals-Siezenheim.

Belarus: A praesidium in **Minsk Comitium** engages in a variety of works which includes distribution of Miraculous Medals, contact work at bus stops, bus stations, and the Church kiosk, promoting family prayer, and arranging confession for those who are unable to go to Church.

Belgium: A praesidium in **Brussels Senatus** reported a couple who had plans for divorce were reconciled following contact with the legionaries. Another praesidium carries out an extensive range of works which includes street contact, contact at bus and tram stops, and Pilgrim Statue visitation to homes. during which the Rosary is recited. Days of Evangelisation are organised regularly in the city centre..

Bosnia Herzegovina: A new praesidium of six members was established. Their

apostolate is home visitation.

Croatia: Zagreb Regia: In Zagreb East Curia works include home visitation and street contact. 21 people returned to the sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Communion. They have some outreach to people suffering from mental illness - the members were invited to read Frank Duff's article entitled 'You came to me affectionately when others called me mad.' Sisak Curia started a book barrow apostolate. Petrinja Curia reported elderly people came back to the sacraments of confession, Holy Communion, confirmation and marriage. In **Split Comitium** the apostolate includes home visitation, Pilgrim Statue visitation, Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the homes and Catechism classes are given to children of lower grades. Seven people received the sacraments after a long time. A new Curia was established in Sibenik.

England: Brentwood Regia: Works undertaken include home visitation and distribution of parish information leaflets and Miraculous Medals. Brentwood East Curia: Four praesidia regularly carry out home visitation. One of those praesidia makes contact with 74 Catholics who are not currently listed in the parish register. One of those visited, a lady who had been away from practice for over 30 years has been to confession. 160 lapsed Catholics met by a Peregrinatio Pro Christo team in 2023 have been followed up by the local praesidium. Members of the junior praesidium have recently commenced visitation in pairs and assisted by senior members, visit the elderly. A praesidium in **Central London Curia** reported on works including Pilgrim Statue visitation, book barrow and promoting the Miraculous Medal and the Rosary. A junior praesidium also promotes the Miraculous Medal. A

praesidium in Middlesbrough Comitium, attached to **Liverpool Senatus**, does home visitation and care home visitation. An 80 year-old lady who had not been to Mass for years went to confession and now receives Holy Communion weekly. The main works in Ashton Curia currently are instructing 12 people on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programme, and running a book barrow. In **Birmingham Senatus** the main works carried out in Coventry Curia are street contact and home and hospital visitation. An apostolate to homosexual people was carried out a few times in Birmingham city with many good contacts made. West Birmingham Curia reported four people met by legionaries are attending the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) course. The works in Leicester Curia are hospital visitation and helping with Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) sessions.

Finland: The praesidium in Helsinki has eight active members, three of whom took the Legion Promise recently. Contact work is done at the railway and Metro stations, where many people are met and offered the Miraculous Medal. Four members conduct adults' Catechism on Thursday after evening Mass. Pilgrim Statue visitation to the homes is carried out also.

France: A praesidium based in St. Germain de Charonne has a wide array of work which includes street contact, visitation of the elderly, listening to and supporting the bereaved and bringing Holy Communion to the housebound.

Germany: Berlin Comitium reported evangelisation projects took place in Frankfurt. **Munich Regia** reported extension work has been carried out in Augsburg, Stuttgart, Munich and Eltz. **Cologne Regia**

reported a presentation on the Legion was given to a group of 50 participants at a retreat in Schoenstatt.

Hungary: In **Budapest Regia** a new praesidium was recently established in a home for the elderly. A praesidium with eight members is involved in prison visitation. A Curia reported legionaries led the Stations of the Cross on Radio Maria during Lent and in May, they prayed the Rosary in Church after every Mass.

Latvia: A praesidium visits the visually impaired in a special home for them and organises some fun activities. They assist with helping some of the residents in the home to attend Mass and receive confession. Holy Mass to celebrate 30 years of the Legion in Latvia was organised for 24th August.

Lithuania: A praesidium in Kaunas Comitium visit the elderly and carry out an apostolate to the visually impaired. Another praesidium do street and park contact work.

Moldova: The six praesidia of the Chisinau Curia are engaged in an apostolate to the sick, lonely and housebound at home and in hospital.

Norway: There are currently seven praesidia totalling 42 full members, 11 probationers, and 131 auxiliary members. Works include outreach to the lapsed and to prisoners, Pilgrim Statue visitation, Sacramental preparation and catechism classes for children. The Acies was celebrated in Oslo and Bergen.

Poland: Warsaw Comitium reports much contact work is done in Willand where many sects gather, aiming to win people over. Many Miraculous Medals were delivered in this place of special need. **Lublin Regia:** The 45th anniversary of the Legion in Poland was

celebrated with 28 priests who are Spiritual Directors concelebrating at a Mass attended by several hundreds of legionaries on June 22nd. The reports relate that new people are joining the active ranks and some auxiliaries are moving to active membership.

Romania: In **Satu Mare Regia** a praesidium in the Cathedral parish undertakes visitation to the sick and housebound and helps them to receive the sacraments, leads the rosary in Church, organises for Eucharistic Adoration, helps the priest with parish duties, cleans the Church, and does many more parish works. The attached Councils are engaging in a similar apostolate.

Russia: Kazakhstan Curia related that the correspondent and a priest made a two-week visit to the Curia. A praesidium in Siberia has four members and a good apostolate is being carried out.

Serbia: In **Sarajevo**, Our Lady of the Way Curia has five praesidia.. The apostolate is mainly home visitation.

Slovakia: The Trnava Comitium reported that following the presentation of the Legion in Sulelkovo, thirteen people signed up for Legion membership.

Sweden: The main works are visitation of the sick and housebound, visitation of the sick in hospital and teaching catechism. Two *Patricians* meetings were held. The new praesidium in Gothenburg is doing well with seven members. The Polish praesidium in Stockholm is also doing well.

Ukraine: It has been reported that 13 new members have now made the Legion promise and a new praesidium of seven members was established.

Wales: The main works in Swansea Curia are home visitation, street contact and street rescue.



And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. (LUKE 1:31)