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Contents

Editorial

As usual there is a balance between material on St Vincent himself and material of a more broadly Vincentian interest, particularly with respect to the Irish Province. Three articles of this issue are in the first category, with the other two in the second.

When Fr Patrick Kearney wrote to the Superior General on 27 September 1861, at the start of the first academic year of St Patrick's College, Armagh, under Vincentian administration he would probably not have thought of development on the scale described by one of his successors, Fr Patrick Dunning, one hundred and ten years later. Equally unlikely is it that when Fr Dunning wrote the article on Armagh he would have expected it to be re-printed seventeen years later to mark the withdrawal of the Vincentians from the college.

This issue contains Fr Patrick Travers' memoirs of his experiences in the Irish College, Paris, during the war years 1939-1945. He had put a moratorium on their publication until after his death.

The Mystery of the Poor

Roderic Crowley

(Revised version of paper read to the
Vincentian Study Group in February 1988)

For Vincent the poor were a mystery, a mystery of salvation. They veiled, and revealed, for him the presence of Christ. They were an essential part of the mystery of salvation into which he called his confrères and the Daughters to enter. He also saw them as a sure means by which we could hope to enter paradise. So, this paper is an attempt to discover what the poor really meant to Vincent de Paul, what was his vision of them, and how much this influenced the rest of his life and activities. A concluding reflection considers how important for us today is the recovery of this vision.

It is good to consider firstly what were the sources from which Vincent drew this vision. While using these sources Vincent made them his own and put his own unique stamp upon them. But still we can speak of four main influences in his life, i.e. the four main people who influenced him, apart from the influences of the experiences he had, which were very important for him. These four people were Bérulle, Duval, Francis de Sales and Benet of Canfield. It is generally accepted now that Bérulle did not have as much influence as was earlier attributed to him, and that Benet of Canfield had much more influence than was originally realised; it was Duval who seems to have directed Vincent to his writings.

Vincent seems to have taken over the Christological emphasis of Bérulle but to have given it his own stamp eventually. In the end he came to prefer Duval to him, especially as regards Duval's view that the most simple people contested the gate of heaven with the wise and were victorious, whereas Bérulle felt that the shepherds of Bethlehem were not in a position to honour worthily the Incarnate Word (cf José Maria Román: *S. Vincenzo de' Paoli,* pp. 85ff). Apart from his strong personal influence on him Vincent also seems to have been greatly affected by Francis de Sales' two main writings *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *Treatise on the Love of God.* The centrality of charity in his life must in no small measure have been due to this factor. Benet of Canfield's

emphasis on the will of God will have led Vincent to read the signs of the times leading him to devote his life to the service of the poor.

Vincent did not merely passively accept all that he received from his spiritual directors. He left his own peculiar stamp and mark upon it. He absorbed it and transformed it into his own personality, which in many ways was different from theirs. Perhaps the special direction which he gave it was to direct it towards the poor and the service of the poor. That is why we can speak of the "mystery" of the poor as the keynote of his life. It was not always so, however, and a real "conversion" had to take place so as to bring it about. He was from poor origins but he wanted to put his poor origins behind him. This was a big factor in his initial attitude towards his chosen "career" of priesthood. His "conversion" seems to have been largely an experiential affair. José Maria Román is very open to the possibility of the reality of Vincent's captivity in North Africa. This experience doubtless sensitized him towards those in a similar plight, and helps to explain his subsequent active concern for them. But the real turning-point would seem to have been his decision to devote the rest of his life to the service of the poor as a means of escaping from his temptations against the faith. What led him to choose this particular decision is not clear. Two later experiences which led him to a greater realisation, at first hand, of the spiritual and temporal needs of the people served as the catalyst to make this decision a reality. The Folleville experience made him realise their spiritual destitution, and that of Châtillon-les-Dombes their material needs.

Vincent's concern for the poor was not mere sympathy or philanthropy but had a deeper source and motivation. He saw it as a theological exercise, a search for God. In this we can see a certain parallel to the "breakthrough" of Ignatius of Loyola in "finding God in all things", and not merely in a life of monastic prayer. Vincent found God in the poor, and each time it was a fresh discovery. That is why he could speak to the Daughters of Charity about "leaving God to find God" when they were called away from their prayers to attend to the needs of the poor. On another occasion he told them that "a Sister will go ten times a day to visit the sick and ten times in the day she will find God there". So, it was not merely a question of bringing God to the poor, or bringing them to God, nor of just visiting them for God's sake. This belief was behind his statement that the poor are "our lords and masters". He said this in the full realisation of the unprepossessing reality which they can so often present. This was the "mystery" of the poor which came to dominate his whole life. Even in his old age it led him to feel that the St Denis gate of Paris should fall on him because he returned to the city while there still

remained work to be done for the poor.

He also had a Christological basis for this activity. He saw it very much as the continuation of the saving mission of Christ. The mottoes which he gave to his two communities reflected this. For the Daughters it was "Caritas Christi urget nos" and for the priests "Evangelizare pauperibus misit me". This latter he drew from Christ's declaration of his mission at Nazareth and the effect of his anointing with the Holy Spirit. He often reminded his communities of the great privilege that was theirs to continue the work of Christ on earth and his special predilection for the poor. Here is perhaps an occasion where the Bérullian influence shows itself.

Benet of Canfield's influence shows itself in the strong emphasis Vincent gave in his spirituality to the will of God. He often spoke of the need not to "tread on the heels of Providence". But he was never far behind it either. For his undertakings he normally depended on the manifestation of some external authority to clinch the matter. But the ones he listened to almost inevitably led him towards the poor and the abandoned. The "cry of the poor" served as a sort of "authority" in itself. At the same time he refused to involve himself and the community in providing for the beggars of Paris before some external authority would indicate that this was God's will. But it must be said that his more sensitive "wavelengths" were tuned in to the poor and their needs. He did not stay at a safe distance from them or insulate himself from the reality of their condition, so that Luigi Mezzadri could, in his Preface to the Italian translation of Román's biography, quote Vincent as saying: "The poor, I have seen them".

In all things Vincent was a realist and a man of practical bent. For him the love of God was normally tested by one's love of the neighbour. So he insisted to his priests "let us love God, brothers, let us love God. But let it be in the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows". Love was the driving force of his own life, up to the very end. His care for the souls redeemed by Christ would have driven him to the ends of the earth. On one occasion he expressed the desire to go to the Indies for this purpose, if the opportunity offered. His understanding of prayer was very much connected with this. While placing great emphasis on the necessity of prayer he distrusted those who felt that pious sentiments alone were enough. He speaks of people who:

> are very pleased with their vivid imagination; they find a fulfilment in the gentle talks they have with God in prayer; they can even talk about it like angels. But from that point onwards, when

> it is a question of working for God, of suffering, of being mortified, of instructing the poor, of going out and seeking the lost sheep, of being glad that they are short of something, of bearing with sickness or other afflictions, alas they are not there any more; they lack courage. No, no, let us not deceive ourselves.

As for St John, so also for Vincent love had to prove itself by deeds. The teaching of St James also found a ready resonance in his life. Zeal for the neighbour's welfare, both spiritual and temporal, is the natural fruit to be expected of love. Otherwise we might expect the same treatment as the barren fig tree. And so Vincent says "if the love of God is a fire, zeal is its flame. If love is the sunlight, zeal is its beaming. Zeal is what is most pure in the love of God". Prayer is the source from which this love of God is to be drawn. Prayer enables us to see the reflection of God in the poor, the outcast, the despised.

Vincent's idea of the priesthood and the Church were very much influenced by his basic vision. He saw himself and his communities as being very much at the service of the Church. He was careful to insist on the need for respect for the Pope, bishops and even parish priests. But he was very much aware of the need for renewal of the Church and renewal of the priesthood, including the episcopacy. For many years he laboured hard to secure the appointment of good bishops through the Council of Conscience. He attributed the disorders which he saw in the Church of his day to the fault of priests. Together with his work for the poor went Vincent's work for priests. Both tasks were closely linked and inspired by the same vision. Delarue writes of him in this connection:

> There were many contemporaries of Monsieur Vincent who, like him, worked to give the Church good priests… But while the Oratory and Saint Sulpice set their accent on the formation of a priest before all else oriented towards God, a "religious of God",… going still further than St John Eudes, Monsieur Vincent set out to form bishops and priests thoroughly "missionary". They were to be completely dedicated to what was the primary work of Jesus Christ and were to go "to preach the good news to the poor"… But our saint's accent is not the same as we find it among the great masters of the French school, though he received much from them, notably from Bérulle. For him it is not the virtue of religion which is foreground, but a burning charity which is apostolic zeal (Jacques Delarue: *The Faith of St Vincent,* pp. 105-6).

Vincent wanted priests who would devote themselves to the poor and have the necessary training to do so. Apart from his retreats for ordinands, which later developed into seminaries, he also established "Tuesday Conferences" for priests, many of whom later helped him in his work for the poor.

The Church which he wished to build up was not a Church of power and pomp and pageantry, as was very much the case in his time. Rather, as Delarue tells us:

> it is from within that he works to change a worldly Church into a Church for the poor, to establish in a true sense a Christian life accessible to the very humblest, to promote the renewal of the priesthood and the episcopacy to a true apostolate, to invent a new style of religious life,… and to be available to the many needs of the poor (op. cit. p. 86).

He liked to quote the saying of a Protestant who was converted to the Catholic Church by the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in it as evidenced by the bringing of the good news to the poor. It might be said that he anticipated the recent declaration of the Church as the church of the poor. In spite of one of the chief proponents of Jansenism, the Abbe de Saint-Cyran, being a close friend of his he fought the heresy tooth and nail and advised Rome about its dangers. He did not want his poor people kept away from the sacraments as a result of its teaching.

Vincent did not have a narrow or clerical idea of the Church, in spite of his special concern for these elements in it. His mentor, Francis de Sales, had opened up to all the paths to holiness in his *Introduction to the Devout Life.* Vincent followed this up by inviting all to participate in the mission of the Church. He gathered large numbers of lay people around him and got them to work closely with him, even the rich and powerful. He made them concerned about the miseries of their brothers and sisters. On one occasion he even declared them to be judges of whether some of these abandoned children should live or die. By this means he got them to part even with some of their personal jewellery in order to help the children. In the full sense of the word he was catholic in his approach to the Church.

The five characteristic virtues which he recommended to the Priests of the Mission were virtues closely linked with his "vision" of the "mystery" of the poor. Without these qualities it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to conduct an effective ministry to them.

It was the era of pulpit eloquence which produced a Bossuet. It was

a time of "studied oratory, of erudite sermons where, besides Latin quotations, there were not lacking also some Greek and Hebrew ones" (J. P. de Almeida in *Vincentiana* 6/1983. p. 522). Vincent was anxious for the poor to hear the word of God in an effective way and so he devised the "little method", a simple way of preaching, perhaps mindful of Francis de Sales' unexpected sermon in the church of St Martin. To see the poor as "lords and masters" it was necessary to be humble oneself. Meekness was necessary not to react against the rough ways of the poor. Mortification was called for in the humanly unrewarding service of the outcasts of society. Zeal was a prerequisite for those who would leave the comfortable benefices in the cities to seek out the neglected country people. So, even if his virtues appear passive at first sight they are the springboard for action.

In looking for the sources of Vincent's spirituality Orcajo, in his book *San Vicente de Paúl II: Espiritualidad y selección de escritos,* (pp. 73ff) describes them as "before all, the gospel". Among the gospels Matthew has first place in his references, with 252 quotations, while Luke and John are almost equal, with a little over 100 each. In Matthew he looks for the teachings of Christ which will lead to, and be helpful in, the service of the poor. In Luke he finds the compassion of Jesus revealed. It is especially from Luke 4, what Jesus said in the synagogue in Nazareth, that he finds the inspiration for his sharing in the mission of Christ to the poor. From John he draws his emphasis on the love of God and of the neighbour. Orcajo quotes Abelly for saying that "he carried (the gospel) in his hand as the brilliant light in order to know how to lead his life". Vincent incarnated the gospel in himself and in his life. The maxims of the gospel were to serve as the guidelines for his community, as he states in their Common Rules. His special focus in the gospels was the public life of our Lord, and his ministry to the poor.

John Prager CM offers two basic focal points for Vincentian spirituality in an article in *Vincentiana* 5-6/1981. He says that these are Vincent's vision of Christ as the evangeliser of the poor, and his vision of the poor man. He says that "Vincent's spirituality stands out from the other followers of Bérulle because, for him, the Son of God not only became a man but became a poor man". And again, "for Jesus people had worth, not because they had wealth and power but because they were children of his Father". He asserts that "Vincent's life revolved around his relationship with Jesus, the evangeliser of the poor". As regards the poor man Vincent had a "faith vision" of him. He sees him as the sacrament of Christ and "the proclamation of the Good News, and the works of justice and charity are the means of making known the love

of God to the poor". It is this vision of St Vincent de Paul that we have tried to set forth in this small paper. We have tried to show that it was the unifying principle of all his life and activities. It was not a vision that he had from the beginning but one that God's providence led him to by devious ways. He, in his turn, responded to it with ever-growing generosity and led others to share in it. It is still necessary today.

From this brief reflection it is possible to conclude that what is most necessary for us today is to recover this vision of Vincent in order to bring new vitality to our community. We need to give this vision the central place in our lives which it had in Vincent's. We have to see the poor as he saw them and bring them to the centre of the stage. Perhaps our first need is to be evangelised by them as he was, rather than start with evangelising them. That renewed vision should then penetrate all our works and undertakings. We should be able to say, as he was, "the poor, I have seen them", and this by means of a close and living contact over a prolonged period. Like Vincent, we too should begin by experience.

St Vincent's Letters to Confrères in 1638-1639

Eamonn Raftery

(Revised version of paper read to
Vincentian Study Group in December 1987)

Calvet's biography of St Vincent divides his life into six sections. The first section, "Birth and Origin", covers the years 1580-1610. The second, "The Road to Sanctity", deals with 1610-1625. The third covers the years 1625-1643 and is entitled "The Period of Constructive Activity".

I read a hundred and ten letters from that third period, covering just under two years, from February 1638 to December 1639. Vincent was fifty-eight at the time and the Congregation was thirteen years old. From those one hundred and ten letters I selected thirty-eight from which the information for this article was gleaned. They give a vivid insight into the man and his characteristics.

He had a marvelous ability to read people and respond to where they were at. He might be founding a new community and renewing the Church in France and spreading the Kingdom of God farther afield, but he always remembered that the work of renewal depended on the individuals who formed that community and the Church.

His care for the sick confrères is exemplified in a letter to Pierre du Chesne:

> I cannot tell how much the consolation which your letter gave me has allayed the pain of hearing about good Monsieur Dufestel's illness. I thank God for both pieces of news, certainly not without rebuking my miserable feelings which are revolting against the acceptance I wish to give to God's will… See that the doctor visits him every day and that he lacks no remedy or nourishment. How I hope the Company will provide for his needs with a holy extravagance! I would be delighted if word were sent to me from somewhere that someone in the Company had sold chalices for that purpose (Letter No. 366).

On another occasion he asks that a room be got ready in the suburbs for the sick person: "What you do to the sick you do to the Lord, and to me". The insert of "and to me" into the gospel phrase speaks volumes.

Vincent even sends to the Superior in Richelieu a detailed remedy for dropsy:

> The President has been cured of dropsy using half a glass of chervil juice mixed with an equal amount of white wine and strained through a cloth. It is taken fasting, without eating for two hours afterwards and without drinking any more than half a pint of liquid at each meal (358).

He obviously talked about more than the things of the Spirit with the President. He said in a letter to Antoine Portail: "That is a great deal with regard to temporal matters. May it please the goodness of God that they may not divert you from spiritual ones" (322). Then Vincent goes on to give a deep insight into his own mindset:

> May God share with us the eternal thought He has of Himself while continuously giving His full attention to the direction of the world and to providing for the needs of all His creatures, even down to a tiny gnat.

As well as interesting himself in the details concerning the confrères' physical and spiritual well-being he was no less interested in the practical efficiency of their apostolate. Fraçois Dufestel complained to Vincent that " no one wrote to anyone in Sancey to recommend the Company" (322a). In replying to this Vincent first consults the Commander de Sillery, who had invited the confrères to give the mission, and he consults Fr de Gondi:

> It is better to be at fault with the advice of those two good men than to take the matter upon ourselves. I shall talk to them again about it and send them your letter.

Dufestel was sensitive about taking advice from Vincent so Vincent got two witnesses to answer him and avoided giving his own advice to him. But Vincent had no difficulty in dealing with his query about the "difficulty of continuing the mission to the soldiers". He said that "the unsettled state of the poor people would probably hinder them from reaping any benefit from the mission".

The missions given in Sancey were funded by the Commander de Sillery; that is why he was consulted by Vincent concerning the publicity. But normally missions were given gratis:

> As for the expenses of the mission, please take care of them when you go on one, even for that good priest from Siena as well, unless he insists to the contrary (404).

So how did Vincent support the missions? He was given houses and lands for support. He writes in one letter that the bishop is to be told that they are trying to sell his house; the missioners had used it for two years and when it became surplus to requirements it was sold.

Financial support must also have come from farming. Vincent wrote from the St Lazare farm in Freneville, where he was recovering from an illness, to the procurator in St Lazare not to cut the hay while the weather was bad. The haymakers are to be paid by contract. Also they are to watch the farm opposite the church in La Chapelle as to cutting etc., and to follow suit (328).

Vincent finds fault with the harrowing of a field, "the one behind the barn": "Find out what happened and let me know". He sends for a farmer's son-in-law to sow the remaining fifteen acres (330). In another instance he says that a certain man is not in good faith over the sale of a meadow and should pay more

(329). Vincent was also a sheep dealer of sorts: "This morning we are to conclude the contract for the farmer's sheep" (330). He even gives hospitality to a butcher, "who is bringing his sheep", to spend the night in St Lazare; the farmer will lend him the stables: "Lodge the gentleman and his servants in our house and treat them cordially on their way both to and from the Saint-Denis fair" (331).

When there was litigation necessary over some property Vincent advises the confrère in question to "seek the advice of one or two well-known lawyers in Amiens to see how you are to proceed, and meet with both of them for that purpose. When you come here we shall do the same thing here. Please bring their advice in writing" (342). His shrewd advice about getting things in writing and listening to the legal eagles together is just as valid today. In another letter he says:

> We signed a contract for the repairs to be made and for the garden wall for about one hundred *écus.* This morning we are to conclude the contract for the farmer's sheep. He wanted us to have them present (330).

It seems that the farmer knew his man!

Others were not as careful about the financial affairs of the Company:

> A mishap which has occurred in the Company has made it clear to me that I need to examine the accounts of expenses and receipts. Please send me yours, Monsieur, or if you have not kept any account of your expenses and receipts, begin to do so for the future, so that one and the same order will be observed everywhere (365).

As well as settling business matters by contract Vincent established the houses of the Company by contract with the bishop. On 4 January 1638 he signed a contract with the bishop of Luçon. One of the clauses was that three of the missioners residing in the house would give missions in the diocese "four times a year at the most appropriate seasons and spend six weeks at this work each time" (note to 363). Sounds a bit like the Australian Mission Project? This contract kept them working for half the year while also funding the job. Another contract was for a mission every five years, and this was paid for by the Commander de Sillery. That contract has a familiar Irish ring about it! In places like Luçon, when the Company became well-known and established, their own house was purchased.

The Company was in demand at this time. The archbishop of Toulouse awaits with impatience their arrival. The bishops most likely to get them were those who provided the accommodation. Vincent praised the confrère who sent an inventory of the furniture to the bishop, adding:

> You will do even better to have mugs and forks made like ours so that you can begin as soon as possible to take your meals in portions (306).

There must have been a free for all before that! Vincent also concluded contracts with the bishops of Poitiers and Chartres. Then as usual he sent the men, who were to follow the order of procedure laid down by himself.

Robert de Sergis was a confrère who found Vincent less than credible in some matters, so when Vincent was writing to him he would quote other people's opinions rather than his own in order to convince him:

> We must hold to the practice of not preaching, catechising or

> hearing confessions in the cities or suburbs where there is an archbishopric or a presidial. Besides, you must know that our Bull is quite explicit about that point (365).

A "presidial" was an appeals court. When Vincent was further questioned about hearing confessions in the suburbs he makes a subtle distinction:

> Although we are not permitted to hear confessions there we could do so a quarter league from there, if there were a chapel, even though the penitents were from the parish in the suburb (368).

Vincent writes to Louis Lebreton in Rome:

> I praise God for the permission you obtained to hear confessions and for the use you are making of it with regard to the poor, the prisoners and the people of the countryside (376).

On another occasion he wrote to Robert de Sergis, who found it difficult to do what he was told:

> You intend to take St Francis Xavier as your patron. In the name of God, do so, particularly with regard to obedience (377).

Four men were sent to the diocese of Geneva to found the mission there (404). At the same time missions were established also in Toul, Metz, Verdun and Nancy among other places. Vincent was to provide 2,000 *livres* per month for the two men who were appointed to the work of helping those afflicted by the famine in Lorraine as a result of the war. Four others were "to assist the poor corporally and spiritually", one of whom was not yet ordained. One effect of the war was to disrupt the work of the mission, though Vincent added: "The division with the Prior is probably a contributing factor as well". His advice is not to take sides: "Only neutral people can reconcile minds" (329). In another letter Vincent notes that when people are in an unsettled state it will hinder them from reaping the benefits of the mission (322a). The Commander de Sillery, who was funding the missioners, complained that the mission in Cérise was not completed; Vincent wanted to know the score:

> I saw the letter you wrote to the Commander, which was also a great consolation to me, but I am not sure whether you have com-

> pleted the mission in Cérise. The Commander is complaining that you have not. Please let me know how matters stand. The letter you wrote to Monsieur de la Salle also gave me great comfort, especially what you told him about continuing the discipline he maintained with the seminary during the mission they gave recently. That is where the backbone of the mission lies (364).

My reading of this is that the priests were directing the ordinands as well as giving the mission and maybe the ordinandi were helping on the mission.

When someone gets sick he is to be taken care of. Then "When you are rested you can start work in the villages belonging to the diocese of Troyes, and Montmirail" (307). Vincent advises the mission to be postponed until the man is entirely cured and restored to his former health.

> There will be no harm, however, in your going to visit the people and having them approve the delay until the mission can be given conveniently (366).

While consultation of the bishops comes in everywhere this is the only reference, around this time, to consulting the people.

Various items of interesting information emerge in these letters: Vincent wants the missions to be given gratis (404). He sends someone on ahead to arrange accommodation and to call a meeting of the Ladies of Charity; even though he sends a lay brother "to serve" he tells the priest: "You will have to give some attention to the food" (323). When Vincent himself is away from St Lazare he writes back to know who is taking care of the prisons and who has the keys (331). He praises someone who, he says, "did well to buy an alarm clock" (365). Maybe this was to help them to get to morning prayer, which included the litany of Jesus. The order of the week included a rest day: "The Cardinal is of the opinion that a day of rest should be taken during the mission" (320). He tells Louis Lebreton that he is right "in accepting remuneration for the Mass… but I think you would do well to distribute the remuneration to the poor" (376). Vincent's care for the poor was shared by his men because he had great difficulty in getting anyone to go on the mission in St Germain en Laye while the Court was in session; the King had to order it (307).

Sermons and lessons were to be kept simple. One man preached to the adults, the other to the children (323). He considers having the sermons of Bernard Codoing copied when he returns from the mission:

> You will have to wait for the summer when he comes home, at which time you can have them copied and perhaps printed just for the Company (368).

No copyright in those days. Nor is it surprising to learn that in those days also the treatment of the sixth commandment gave rise to comment:

> The mission in St Germain is coming to a close with a blessing although, in the beginning, they had occasion to practise the holy virtue of patience… The firm stand taken against low-necked dresses gave rise to that practice of patience (307).

In other letters he touches on the same topic:

> In the name of God, Monsieur, we must be very circumspect in explaining the sixth commandment. We shall one day be in a great deal of trouble because of that (306).

> As for what you say about M. Codoing's making a big point about explaining the sixth commandment… I ask him most humbly not to speak about it again in Richelieu, or in any other place, except in a very moderate way, for several reasons which I shall enumerate to him (316).

Vincent pointed out the good effects of the mission in Richelieu:

> I have never seen a people more attentive and devout at Holy Mass and they receive the sacraments often. There is no one leading a scandalous life. The townspeople seem to be living in peace and without division as they were before. The taverns are less frequented, almost not at all, especially during services and on Sundays and feastdays. The Charity is doing very well (364).

That latter point seemed to be the test:

> Then you will really have to establish the Charity. I hope to send you an excellent Daughter of Charity for that purpose. She does bloodletting, administers medicines, and gives enemas (306).

Among the members of the Charity in St Germain en Laye are ladies-in-waiting, ladies of the bed-chamber, the Queen's maids of honour. They

went in four groups to collect money in the town (307). It sounds like a Flag Day!

On another occasion he says that the Cardinal will give something annually to the Charity in Richelieu till it can support itself by "ordinary collections"; this sounds like collections after mass on Sundays. But he tells the priest to whom he is writing this to "give it ten *écus* immediately" (320). In another letter about Richelieu he says:

> But for the sick, if the Bishop does not provide the necessary funds for them, you should contribute fifteen or twenty *sous* a week, which you can have placed in the alms-dish of the woman taking up the collection (306).

At the end of the mission in La Chapelle, not far from St Lazare:

> We gathered together all the poor from Lorraine who were in the city and gave a loaf of bread to each one every day for a week. There were about three hundred of them (376).

In Toul the confrères had about forty coming to them in their house, although it was small. Some of these were sick, because there was no hospital in the town. They were also attending one hundred and fifty others outside the city, all of whom they fed (368).

This work inspired the seminarists:

> Our young men are asking to do what you and I did. I think the seminary is made up of more than twenty, although we withdrew ten or twelve of them either to study Theology at the Bons-Enfants or to work on the missions (368).

The Charity was usually set up at the end of a mission: "Do it now, as the people are well disposed". The bishop had to give permission for its establishment. Vincent sends the rule customarily used in Paris. When things went wrong with *a* Charity Vincent used to send an expert to straighten them out, saying on one occasion "he is experienced in the proper way to make it a success". It seems that the Daughters of Charity were the experts sent to be the lynch pin of the Charity. Provision for their accommodation was sometimes made by the bishop, sometimes by wealthy locals. Nor was it always all plain sailing with the Charities: "I can see quite well this is not the time to re-establish them. Our Lord will give us a more opportune and peaceful moment if he wishes" (318).

Some of the opinions Vincent expressed were of his own time and do not transfer well to ours: “I am a little suspicious about that poor woman’s fondness for arranging her hair; you must try to make her change” (326); the success or failure of this piece of advice is not known.

May I end this like Vincent and many a missioner since: “The mission will end in four days with a very special blessing” (306). Shades of Fr Willie McGlynn!

St Vincent and the Foreign Missions

William Clarke

(Revised version of paper read to
Vincentian Study Group in January 1988)

There was nothing automatic about St Vincent's sending missionaries outside France. In the first fifteen years of the mission-effort he was very absorbed with his beloved, poor, country people of his native country. True, he sent missionaries to Rome in 1631, but they were primarily to represent the community at the Holy See. When the first call to the foreign missions came in 1639 he deflected it by referring to the enormous work being done, and to be done, in the rural missions of France.

A change of direction

In the year 1640 an explicit request for two Lazarists for the foreign missions came from Bishop Francesco Ingoli, secretary of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide,* and it set Vincent thinking and praying. In a letter dated 1 June to Louis Lebreton in Rome he described what happened:

> What shall I say to you concerning Bishop Ingoli's proposal? Nothing indeed, Father, except that I accept it with all the reverence and humility I can, as coming from the hand of God; and that we shall do what we can to undertake it… Since writing the above I have been to celebrate Holy Mass. This is the thought that came to me: Because the power to send *ad gentes* resides in the person of His Holiness alone, he has the power to send every priest throughout the earth for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; and all priests have the obligation to obey him in that regard. According to that maxim, which seems reasonable to me, I offered this Little Company for His Divine Majesty to go wherever His Holiness commands (II 50-51).

There is an echo here of the Jesuit vow of obedience to the pope and also a reflection of counter-reformation Catholicism which experienced

very strong leadership from such popes as Paul III and Pius V. The elevation of the commission *de Propaganda Fide* to a Sacred Congregation in 1622 almost coincided with the beginning of Vincent's own mission, and it enabled the pope to exercise a very immediate influence on the foreign missionary effort of the Church.

Vatican II has modified this highly-centralised approach to foreign missions by championing the collegiality of the bishops, which we see operating in the regular synods that have taken place since then. The opening paragraph of the decree on the Church's missionary activity, *Ad gentes,* states:

> The apostles, on whom the Church was founded, following the footsteps of Christ, "preached the word of truth and begot churches". It is the duty of their successors to carry on this work so that "the word of God may run and be glorified" (2 Thess. 3:1), and the kingdom of God proclaimed and renewed throughout the whole world.

Bishops and pope together, as is re-affirmed in paragraph 6:

> This task which must be carried out by the order of bishops, under the leadership of Peter's successor, and with the prayers and co-operation of the whole Church…

International missionary societies, congregations and orders often find themselves caught between the demands of local bishops and the aims of their institution. Thus the White Fathers withdrew their entire mission force from Mozambique in 1972 as a protest against the Portuguese-controlled church and state partnership. So St Vincent's intuition still needs to be considered: that an international missionary group falls more logically under the jurisdiction of the universal pastor, at least in terms of *sending* on mission or choosing missions, than it does under a local bishop. Thus St Ignatius' vow of obedience to the pope.

The full ramifications of that argument deserve to be discussed in much more detail, but for the purposes of this article what we see is St Vincent acknowledging God's call coming through the pope via the congregation *de Propaganda Fide* in the year 1640. All his missions outside France, with the noted exception of Italy, date from that time. Undoubtedly this change of direction led the Congregation along the road to become an international community and not just a French institute confined to France.

The missionary vocation

The first priest Vincent appointed to Madagascar was Charles Nacquart and to him he described the missionary vocation and its demands in a letter dated 22 March 1648:

> A divine call as great and adorable as that of the greatest apostles and saints of the Church of God! Eternal designs accomplished in time in your person! Humility, Father, is the only means of supporting such a grace; and then perfect abandonment of all that you are and can be, with an overflowing confidence in your sovereign Creator, will be sure to follow. Generosity and heroic courage are needed, and also you need a faith as great as that of Abraham; you stand in great need of the charity of St Paul; zeal, patience, courtesy, poverty, solicitude, discretion, moral integrity and a great desire to sacrifice yourself entirely for God, are as suitable for you as they were for the great St Francis Xavier (III 279).

Eternal designs of God, humility in accepting such a grace: these themes are clearly found in St Vincent speaking about parish missions at home to the community in St Lazare on 6 December 1658:

> Our Lord asks of us that we evangelise the poor... We have a great reason to humble ourselves here, seeing that the eternal Father applies us for the designs of his Son, who has come to evangelise the poor and who has given this as a. sign that he was the Son of God and that the awaited Messiah was come (XII 79).

And as for the virtues demanded, are they not written of in the Common Rules and spoken of in so many conferences in St Lazare as being necessary for all missioners?

The spirit of this vocation is not something to be simply presumed. It must be prayed for because it is a deep interior grace in the heart of each missionary, as St Vincent said to the St Lazare community after a repetition of prayer on 22 August 1655:

> Let us ask God to give to the community this spirit, this heart, this heart that makes us go everywhere, this heart of the Son of God, heart of our Saviour, which makes us ready to go as he went and if the eternal wisdom judges it so, to work for the conversion of poor nations. For this he sent his apostles; he sends us like them to carry the fire everywhere: “I have come to cast fire on the earth

> and what do I wish but that it be kindled". Everywhere this divine fire, everywhere this fire of love, of the holy fear of God throughout the world, to Barbary, to the Indies, to Japan (XI 291).

Missionary losses

Although the call to the Madagascar mission spelt danger, the greatest single loss of missionaries occurred much nearer home, in the city of Genoa in northern Italy. Here a plague swept through the population in 1657 and the Lazarists turned their house into a hospital where they nursed the sick and dying. One by one they caught the disease themselves and seven out of the eight died. When St Vincent heard the news he grieved over them one by one, almost as David did over Absalom.

The same personal feeling for his missionaries can be seen in a letter he wrote to a group departing for Madagascar in 1655:

> You know your health will be in danger in this foreign climate until you have grown a little accustomed to it and hence I warn you not to expose yourselves in the sun, and to do nothing for some time except to apply yourselves to the study of the language…; you will not want for God's special assistance, for he has said that even if the mother should forget the child of her womb he himself will take care of it. How much more, then, are you bound to believe that he will be good to you, my dear Fathers, and that he will take pleasure in training, defending and providing for you, who have abandoned yourselves into his hands and have placed all your confidence in his protection and power (V 434-5).

Unfortunately the early successes and great hopes for Madagascar were gradually submerged by the continual toll of death and disaster which finally brought the mission to an end eleven years after the saint's death. It also brought out of St Vincent his strongest statement on how the call of God must be followed, no matter what losses are suffered. This was to the St Lazare community after a repetition of prayer on 30 August 1657:

> Perhaps a member of our Congregation will assert that Madagascar should be given up; the language of flesh and blood will say that no one else should be sent there, but I am sure that is not the language of the soul. What! Are we to leave our good Father Bourdaise there all alone? Of course I am not unaware that the

> death of these our colleagues will cause astonishment to some. God led six hundred thousand men out of Egypt, not counting women and children, to bring them into the promised land; yet of this great number only two, and not even Moses who was their leader, arrived there. God has called our colleagues to that country and in spite of it some die on the way and the others soon after arrival. In face of these events we should bow our heads and adore the wonderful and incomprehensible ways of God. For were they not called by God to that country?… I ask you, is not that a true vocation? Very well, then, my Fathers and Brothers, knowing that could we possibly be so weak and cowardly as to abandon the Lord's vineyard to which he has called us just because five or six have died?… No, I cannot believe that a single member of the Congregation would be so lacking in courage as to be unwilling to go out and take the place of those who have died. (XI 420, 422).

In the end it was continuous warfare on the island that forced the Lazarists to withdraw, but forty years after that they were called again to the same quarter of the world. Remembering the Madagascar mission the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* asked the Lazarists to take over the missions in the islands of Mauritius and Reunion from the Paris Foreign Mission Society. Here they worked for almost a century before handing over to the Holy Ghost Congregation in the early 1800s. Later again the Lazarists returned to Madagascar and they have numerous flourishing missions there today.

In the end, I suppose, we really have no control over disasters, losses, apparent failures. Clearly St Vincent's guiding light was the call of God according to his eternal designs and our willingness to sacrifice all in answer to that divine vocation.

Firmness and flexibility

Firmness about the divine vocation, this we have just seen in stark relief. Flexibility? Yes, in relation to the delicate problem of Algiers and Tunis, for example.

If Vincent did not want his missionaries to accept ecclesiastical benefices, how much more should they not refuse civil appointments? Yet in the case of Algiers and Tunis, Vincent agreed with the Duchess d'Aiguillon's idea that the French consul be nominated by the Superior General of the Mission. This was to ensure that the consul be favourable to the mission. But it led to great difficulties for the missionaries themselves.

In Tunis, for example, the ruler or Dey insisted that Fr Jean le Vacher be consul. So he was responsible for all French, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Fleming and German Christians. He had to forward all civil claims by them, to deliver letters of clearance to vessels setting out from Barbary, to protest against captures by pirates and demand restitution, to negotiate the redemption of slaves, to prevent merchants from importing into Turkish dominions all prohibited goods such as sails, ropes, iron, lead and military equipment. Three job-descriptions are evident here: diplomatic consul, lawyer and customs officer. And what about the ministry of priesthood?

Church authorities in Rome were also asking this question and giving a negative reply. In the 1650s they forbade priests to be consuls. Vincent wanted to sell the consulates but the Duchess persuaded him to hang on and he justified it as follows, in a letter to Firmin Get, superior in Marseille, dated 5 April 1658:

> Even if there were no other good result from our holding these positions than that of revealing the beauty of our holy religion to this accursed land by sending men there who gladly cross the seas, leave home and comfort, and expose themselves to a thousand insults and outrages for the consolation of their brethren in affliction, I think that both men and money would be well spent (VII 117).

Several months before writing that letter he had asked Fr Edme Jolly, his representative in Rome, to get a reprieve on the ban (VI 627).

Flexibility about the means, firmness about the end, the mission itself: taking on an office not all that suitable to missionaries for the sake of the mission itself. This can also be seen in the affair of the bishop of Babylon; for sixteen years negotiations went on about naming a Lazarist as bishop. (Were the *confirmandi* meanwhile sitting and weeping by the waters of?) Vincent did not want Lazarists to become bishops. Yet in this case he modified his position, as he wrote to Jean Dehorgny in Rome on 2 May 1647:

> I have again passed over the danger there is that this example might give some individuals in the Company reason to seek after Church dignities. I decided that the remoteness of the place in question, the risks run in going there and residing there, and the apostolic humility with which the man destined for the post will be able to conduct himself... will remove both the reason to seek

> after such positions and several other disadvantages (III 183-4).

In the end, however, having offered his own assistant, Lambert aux Couteaux, the negotiations fell through. But he had again demonstrated flexibility or adaptability in the face of unusual circumstances in a foreign mission.

Flexibility about appointments, firmness about the need to be united as a community. His team for Ireland would nowadays be called an international team: four or five Irish, two French and a Jerseyman. So he goes to the heart of what unites a religious community, the person of Jesus himself. Abelly says that Vincent told them:

> Be united… and God will bless you, but let your union be through the charity of Jesus Christ… A union not cemented by the blood of this divine Saviour cannot last. It is… in Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ you must be united. The spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of peace and union. How could you draw souls to Jesus Christ if you were not united to one another and to him?

Not much room for narrow-minded nationalism there!

A similar appeal for unity to the group departing for Madagascar in 1655:

> So then, Fathers, love one another and you will help one another; bear with one another and be united amongst yourselves in the spirit of God, who has chosen you for this great design and will preserve you for its accomplishment (V 435).

He never sent one missionary on his own, always more than one. And where communities were founded, as in Poland and Italy, provinces grew and flourished, carried on by natives of these countries. Where communities could not be founded, as in Ireland, Scotland and North Africa, the works and missions died with the pioneering missionaries. These missionaries did just as good work as anyone else, but where indigenous communities are not founded the works of the missionaries will gradually die out. Union as a community, therefore, was a foundation stone of missionary work in St Vincent's view. On this point he showed great firmness and, apart from being justified by the New Testament, if such an expression seems appropriate, he is certainly justified by the history and development of the Congregation of the Mission.

A missionary community?

For a moment I would like to take the spotlight off St Vincent and place it on another French missionary rounder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. This man is unlikely ever to be canonised as he erected a monumental tomb for himself in his own cathedral before he died. Yet I believe he puts us a very firm challenge about our missionary thinking today and I will relate it back to St Vincent, comparing and contrasting, as the exam questions used to put it.

In founding the White Fathers these are some of Lavigerie's chief points:

> 1. He founded an international seminary where the students were encouraged to learn each other's languages and cultures: French, German, Scottish, Italian, Irish, Spanish, etc. Already the students were being challenged in their training to break out of their own cultural and nationalistic moulds (at a time when European nationalism was at its most militant). This was to prepare them for meeting new cultures in missionary lands, helping them to distinguish what genuinely belonged to the gospel and what was simply a disposable piece of cultural wrapping.
>
> 2. The seminary was situated in North Africa. Thus the students had already come to the continent which would be their future mission-field and would come into immediate contact with one of the major forces of that continent, Islam. They would begin to live the missionary atmosphere as soon as they entered the seminary.
>
> 3. Lavigerie insisted on a four-year catechumenate before baptism and he worked out many other missionary programmes in great detail, adapted to the particular circumstances of each mission.

A lot of this spirit is to be seen in St Vincent also. We have seen his appeals to unity in Jesus Christ, transcending national boundaries, his flexibility and adaptability in different circumstances – and in his day the Congregation was not divided up into provinces. When Irishmen joined in France they did not join the French Province; they joined the Mission. Likewise the Italians who joined in Italy, the Poles who joined in Poland. They had their local superiors and the Superior General. All belonged to the same Mission, whose pattern was the rural missions of France which could be applied, as appropriate, in Madagascar, Warsaw or Limerick.

Not such a bad pattern at all, but where does that leave us now? The

White Fathers have held on to Lavigerie's basic direction and remain a very strong missionary force in the Church. But isn't it possible that we have narrowed into our separate Province, bearing the weight of history on our shoulders, largely immobilised by fixed missions so that at times missionaries have to struggle to get free to do missionary work rather than stay at home to celebrate mass in local convents? And when the call comes from "Barbary, the Indies or Japan" we have to say "Sorry, we're all helping the local Church".

The unified vision

The eternal designs of God called the missionary to the particular people whom he would help. He responded to God's call by trying his best to "put on Christ Jesus". And then he carried on the work in the spirit of Folleville, the prototype of the rural French mission. Added to that was the visitation of the sick, as in, Châtillon-les-Dombes or, as in, Genoa, Warsaw and Barbary, the ministration to people dying of the plague. One of the fruits of the mission was the setting up of Confraternities of Charity, so Folleville led to Châtillon, or preaching led to charitable action. Here was a unified vision of mission which gave the Congregation its early dynamism.

The only departure I have seen from this was St Vincent's support for the Chevalier Paul's attempted expedition to North Africa. When lack of money delayed the expedition Vincent promised 20,000 *livres* from the money collected for ransoming slaves. Of course the expedition aimed at getting slaves back, but by powder and shot rather than by negotiation and payment. According to Calvet "the Ladies of Charity were fired with enthusiasm and emptied their purses". In fact the expedition failed and St Vincent died before he knew of it. But he had supported what has been a very dangerous feature of European foreign missions: the colonial spirit, subduing other people by superior force of arms so that missionaries can then proceed to convert them. A far cry from the kind of mission practised by St Paul who, from his Roman prison, aimed at conquering Rome, but not by any force of arms.

In view of later events in North Africa Calvet's final words contain a sad irony:

> It was not until 1830 that France, by occupying Algeria, put an end to slavery and piracy and made Vincent de Paul's dream come true. How many of those who landed at Algiers were aware that France, in the sight of God and man, derived her rights over North Africa from St Vincent!

This was written in 1948, only a short few years before a bloody war of independence drove the French back to their own country, leaving very few native Christians behind them. Not a great success in missionary terms.

With this exception I find that the unified vision of mission prevails. This is most neatly expressed in the words Vincent wrote in the opening chapter of the Common Rules:

> Following the example of Christ himself
> and his disciples,
> go through the towns and villages
> and there break the bread of the divine word
> for little ones
> by preaching and catechising;
> also urge the making of general confessions
> of the whole past life,
> hear these confessions,
> settle quarrels and disputes,
> establish the Confraternities of Charity.

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St Patrick's College, Armagh

Patrick J. Dunning

(This article was written as an Introduction to an appeal for the College Development Scheme in 1971; one slight correction has been made)

In 1793 an act of the Irish Parliament gave considerable freedom to Catholics to provide for their own education, and from this date begins our modern system of education for Catholics.

The immediate need in the field of secondary education was for a major seminary to give specialised training to aspirants to the priesthood, and for secondary boarding and day schools which could offer the necessary higher education for those wishing to enter major seminaries or to follow a university course. In 1793 St Patrick's College, Carlow, the first Catholic secondary school, was founded. Two years later St Patrick's College, Maynooth, the national seminary, to which for many years was attached a lay college, was established. A secondary school was founded in Navan for the diocese of Meath in 1802. St Jarlath's College, Tuam, followed in 1807. Clongowes College was founded by the Jesuits in 1814. Castleknock College was opened by the Vincentians in 1835, having started on Usher's Quay in 1833, partly as a diocesan college for the Dublin diocese. In the same year St Malachy's College, Belfast, was founded by Dr William Crolly for Down and Conor.

Dr Crolly was transferred to Armagh in 1835. He was the first post-reformation archbishop to reside in the ancient city for a great part of the year and to perform his episcopal duties there. He had no cathedral, no proper residence and no secondary school. An attempt had been made to found such a school as early as 1794 by the Reverend John Maguire, who opened a boarding and day school at Clare Castle, Armagh, but no accounts are available as to the success of this venture. Early in the nineteenth century there was a classical school in Armagh under the direction of a Mr Breen. It is doubtful if either of these schools was still in operation when Archbishop Crolly took up his duties in Armagh. He considered the founding of a secondary school to be his most immediate task.

A site for the new secondary school at Sandy Hill was obtained and

a diocesan collection was begun to provide the necessary funds. St Patrick's College, Armagh, opened on 6 August 1838 with only twelve students, of whom three intended to study for the priesthood. By the end of the academic year the roll had risen to fifty-five, and included some day pupils. It was under the direction of the diocesan clergy. The first President was Fr Matthew Gosson, and he was assisted by Fr Edward Dooly, Mr McAllister and Mr Maguire. The advertisement for the school tells us that the terms were:

> Board, washing and Education – Twenty pounds per annum, paid quarterly in advance – plus Two Shillings per quarter for ordinary medical attendance… Nothing more is required than that the College should be self-supporting.

From 1838 to 1861 St Patrick's College, under the direction firstly of Fr Gosson, then of Fr O'Dowd, Fr Eugene Troy, Fr Hughes and Fr McVeigh, went through a difficult period of ups and downs. These were, of course, the difficult Famine years. As early as 1854 Archbishop Joseph Dixon asked the newly formed Irish Province of the Vincentian Congregation to take charge of the school. This offer was not accepted until 1861, and since then the College has been under the direction of the Vincentian community.

At first there was no spectacular change or development. Under the direction of Fr Patrick Kearney CM (1861-64), Fr James Kelly CM (1864-73), Fr Michael Mullan CM (1873-77), and Fr Patrick Boyle CM (1877-86), St Patrick's prospered and continued to educate students for the priesthood and for lay careers. The first extension, the north wing (present kitchen area) was added about 1870; the farm buildings were added in 1877; and a temporary gymnasium, the site of which is now unknown, was erected in 1878. The staff consisted of three Vincentian priests, one, or occasionally two, Vincentian lay brothers, and normally one full-time lay teacher. The pension was increased in 1861 to £22 and again in 1874 to £30, but even with these increases the small and hard-working staff could not fulfil the hope that "the College be self-supporting". An official Visitation Report by the Vincentian Provincial in November 1870 tells us:

> The Community consists of Fr James Kelly (Superior), Fr Laurence Johnson, Fr Joseph Hanly and Fr John Burke who, though belonging to the staff of the Irish College, Paris, helps his dear confrères while the Irish College, Paris, remains closed on

> account of the siege of that city. The number 74 is a considerable increase upon past years. It is to be regretted that the income of the Establishment does not admit of a larger number of professors. Hence arises too great pressure upon the present staff.

During the long tenure of office of Fr Michael Carrigy CM (1886-1919) there was a tendency to restrict the intake to aspirants to the priesthood, and perhaps in consequence of this policy a note of austerity was introduced into the student regime and the numbers in the College dropped. In 1907 the second extension, the south wing (present classrooms 1 - 4 and study hall) was built.

The slow beginnings of a change took place under Fr Edmund Cullen CM (1912-1922) and Fr John Campbell CM (1922-1929) and came to fruition under Fr Thomas Rafferty CM (1929-1944). These were years of greater prosperity when an increased number of parents were anxious to obtain secondary education for their children.

A minor extension took place in 1929 with the provision of a temporary science hall, with a woodwork room attached. In 1933 the chapel wing extension was added, providing a new chapel on the ground floor, with two small dormitories on the floors above. In 1938, the centenary year, the College roll was still only 125 but this number filled the College to capacity and a further expansion was under way.

The 1939 extension provided a new recreation hall or assembly hall on the ground floor, with two large dormitories above. The ground floor of the south wing, which had served as an assembly hall, was now converted into classrooms, and the dormitory above was converted into a study hall. A glazed veranda linked the old house to the new extension. An infirmary and matron's quarters were provided, two reception rooms and a new entrance provided and the electric lighting and central heating system were modernised. The cost of this major extension, not including furnishings, was in excess of £15,000. This was met from the proceeds of a general diocesan collection.

With the ending of the Second World War and the implementing of the 1944 Education Act a new chapter in the life of St Patrick's began.

Many Grammar School scholarships, granted on the Eleven Plus basis of qualification, were now available, and a sixty-five per cent pointed out that much additional accommodation was needed for St Patrick's, where the numbers had now risen to 214. In 1951 the then President, Fr Augustine Sheridan CM, with the approval of the Governors, embarked on a further major extension. A new eastern academic wing provided six new classrooms, an art-history room, a geography room, two science

laboratories with good ancillary rooms, together with shower and locker-room accommodation on the ground floor. The refectory was extended and the kitchen modernised, and additional sanitary accommodation provided. A complete reorganisation of the games facilities took place. The old handball alleys were removed and replaced at the back of the College. A new all-weather playing space for either football, basketball or tennis was made in the old "Ring" area, and five good playing fields were made. The work was finally completed in 1955 at a cost of over £73,000 not including furnishing. Grant-aid of sixty-five per cent was received from the Ministry but the remaining thirty-five per cent put a most severe strain on the College resources.

The Governors and the President might well have thought that further expansion would not be required for a long time to come. But in 1956-57 the Ministry inspectors, while very appreciative of the work done, noted that the numbers in the College had risen to 265 (180 boarders and 85 day pupils) and warned of the possible necessity of further expansion. The facilities for the modern approach to physical education were inadequate. The change from the old classical school tradition to the newer mixed school, with greater emphasis on scientific training, and the rapid increase in the number of day pupils, called for additional accommodation.

By 1964 it was evident that the fears or hopes expressed nine years earlier were realised. The College roll had risen to 317 (189 boarders and 128 day pupils). The Ministry inspectors stressed that the rapid expansion of the Senior School had made the existing academic accommodation and equipment seriously deficient, and that a further expansion of numbers was anticipated. Among the major items of necessary additional accommodation recommended were: an additional laboratory for physics and chemistry, together with a new biology laboratory; a new and fully equipped gymnasium; a new library and careers room; a language laboratory; a music centre; a sixth form centre; additional accommodation for day pupils and staff. Fr Sheridan had in the intervening years been trying in most difficult circumstances to pay off the debt of the 1951-55 expansion. The College fees had been deliberately kept very low to cater for the less well off families, and the original intention that the fees be sufficient "to keep the College self-supporting" had never been achieved. In 1952 the boarding fee was still only £34 per annum, with the tuition fee as low as £16 per annum. In 1964 it had only been raised to £75 boarding with £52-10-0 for tuition, a completely inadequate charge.

By 1966 Fr Sheridan, with help from His Eminence and the

Vincentian community, had paid off the debt, and negotiations for further expansion began between the Governors and the Ministry. Years of continued ill-health forced Fr Sheridan to retire in June 1967 but the good Lord did not allow him to leave St Patrick's. He died suddenly at College on 6 August 1967.

Since then the new President has, on behalf of the Governors, been involved in protracted and complicated negotiations with the Ministry of Education regarding the nature and extent of the new expansion. By 1968 the College roll had risen to 348 (196 boarders and 152 day pupils); by 1969 there was a further increase to 354 (196 boarders and 158 day pupils). This increase amounted to an over-crowded two-form entry Grammar School, with the possibility or probability of inevitable expansion to three-form entry with a College roll slightly in excess of 400. However, in view of the Craigavon development, and other educational developments, the prospect of a further major increase was considered to be uncertain. College land had been vested for the new Moy Road and this involved the partition of the farm into three uneconomic isolated units; it also involved the loss of two playing fields. Provision had to be made for new playing fields. In 1967 the pld Monaghan railway line cutting at the back of the cemetery was purchased, and fill from this area was sold to the contractor of the Moy Road scheme. In removing the fill he levelled this whole area, which has been set aside for playing fields development.

During 1968-69, while awaiting the Ministry's decision on the academic extension and on the playing fields development, it was decided by the Governors to take the first necessary steps to modernise, and perhaps increase, the boarding accommodation. A new sixth form dormitory block, consisting of private rooms for head prefects, a flat for a resident member of staff, seven rooms each with four self-contained cubicles, together with showers and toilet facilities, was built at a cost of £18,000. This expenditure was met by a contribution of £2,000 from His Eminence William Cardinal Conway, a contribution of £2,000 from the Provincial of the Vincentian Congregation, compensation received as a result of the acquisition of land for the Moy Road scheme, and the sale of College property. In 1968 the Governing Body agreed to operate the College under the provisions of the Education Amendment Act, Nothern Ireland, 1968, and the College is now entitled to 80% grant on both necessary and approved buildings and equipment.

In September 1970 the Ministry approved of the playing fields development scheme and since then has given the go-ahead on the work. The Ministry and Governors at this same time agreed on a Schedule of

Necessary Academic Accommodation and it is hoped that finance will be available to allow this major extension to begin in the Autumn of 1971.

The cost of the playing fields development will be in the region of £50.000, and the cost of the new academic block will be in the region of £420,000. The Governors have also decided to complete the renovation and modernisation of the boarding facilities, and this work, which will cost a minimum of £30,000, will not be grant aided. The financial responsibility on the College for this final expansion will be in the region of £120.000. The College cannot meet the cost of this new expansion. Even with the raising of fees the boarding school has still to be heavily subsidised and all available resources are needed for this purpose.

The newly formed St Patrick's College, Armagh, Development Committee feels confident that past pupils, parents and friends of the College will give full and generous support to raise the large sum required. Since 1838 St Patrick's College has educated the vast majority of the priests of the diocese, and indeed large numbers of priests also for the American and English and foreign missions, as well as for religious orders and congregations. It has trained from the beginning, and in vastly increasing numbers since 1948, a multitude of laymen eminent in the public, professional, business and farming life of the northern half of Ireland. It is now, though still diocesan property, an outstanding Grammar School with a fine academic record, offering the best type of education for Catholic youth and preparing them for professional or business careers. It has never forgotten, and will never forget, its primary original purpose of preparing young men for the priesthood and fostering vocations, but it is now by evolution preparing the majority of its pupils for the role which Vatican Two expects the educated layman to play in the modern world.

The diocesan authorities and the Vincentian Congregation will contribute generously towards the present needs, but even if they had the resources they cannot be expected to do more than this. Generations of laymen have received, and made the most of, a good education at an unrealistic cost, for which they must surely look back in gratitude. So, too, will generations of parents. The new St Patrick's will retain all that is best in the spirit and tradition of the past. Preference will continue to be given not only to boys of the Armagh diocese but also to sons of past pupils wherever they may live; and a limited number of scholarships will be given to boys, especially to those with aspirations to the priesthood, whose parents genuinely cannot afford the full fees.

St Patrick's College has had an outstanding academic tradition. A

very high percentage of its sixth form school leavers consistently win scholarships to universities, colleges of education or institutes of further education. This academic tradition will be maintained, but the horizon will be broadened to provide courses in craft and business studies to meet the expanding and more comprehensive needs of education today. For a school of its size it has also had a history of outstanding achievement in games. It won the McRory Cup on its inception in 1918 and in twelve subsequent years. In 1947 it won the Hogan Cup, the all-Ireland championship. These traditions will be maintained, though with the rapid growth of the other Grammar Schools in Northern Ireland it will not be easy to revive the glories of past years.

Some Experiences During the War Years: The Irish College in Paris 1939-1945.

Patrick Travers

(PT gave a talk at the Annual Dinner of the ICP Pastmen, apparently in the late 1940s; he later wrote a fuller account of the same material; neither typescript has a date. What follows is the fuller version, with some insertions from the earlier one)

I have called this "Some experiences during the war years" and I want to apologise beforehand if the personal pronoun appears in it rather frequently. Let me say at the outset that these experiences were not as alarming or nerve-racking as one might be led to imagine from reports of war experiences that sometimes appear in the newspapers. Perhaps the hardest thing to bear during the war years was being deprived of practically all communication with the homeland. During the whole period of the German occupation of France I had only one or two letters from Ireland. I could, of course, and did on a few occasions, use the services of the Irish Legation to communicate with Ireland, but the Legation for all the occupied zone was in Berlin, and so this method was very slow.

Few of us believed that war would come. At least we continued to hope against hope, until Germany invaded Poland. It was then seen that France would be involved. The mobilisation of the troops had been gradually going on for some time and the Maginot Line was being fully manned. The balloons *(saucisses* as they were called by the French) were ringed around the capital. The lighting was partially dimmed. Everyone was advised to try on his gas-mask and to be familiar with the nearest air-raid shelter. Everybody, of course, believed that Germany would try to destroy Paris before any formal declaration of war, and most people as well as believing that gas would be used had an altogether exaggerated idea of what damage aerial bombardment could do, at least in the earlier stages of the war. During the few days between the

invasion of Poland and the declaration of war by England and France the wildest rumours were current and widely believed. Tales of atrocities by Germans during the 1914-18 war were again unearthed and most people firmly believed that if anybody fell into the hands of the Germans he would be better off dead. The Germans were supposed to have their spies and fifth columnists everywhere.

Two of the Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy, who had formed part of the community looking after the domestic affairs of the college, left for England on what must have been one of the last trains before the actual declaration of war; the others had gone some days previously. What a job it was to get a taxi to transport them and their luggage to the station! Around the station was the greatest confusion. Everybody seemed to be travelling, getting home, no doubt, before the opening of the fray. The sisters got a place on the train. It was dimly lit with its blue lamps. I didn't wait long in that sea of humanity, but bent my steps back to the rue des Irlandais, now the sole occupant of the old college. On the way home that beautiful September evening that once gay and brilliantly lit city was now blacked out. People with anxious faces were hurrying hither and thither with parcels and cases, and the gas-masks strapped over the shoulder; the balloons were riding in the air; the gendarmes, now equipped with rifle, pacing to and fro before the Chambre des Députés or one of the other public buildings. My own feelings, too, can be easily imagined; what did the future hold?

When I came home I put on the wireless, my greatest comfort during the war. I turned the knob to listen to the various bulletins of news or instructions as the case might be, hoping still that the conflagration would not burst. I slept somehow that night. Next day I remember listening in sometime to the BBC and hearing Mr Chamberlain saying that we were at war with Germany. It had come, and the actual knowledge did not seem to bring any additional terrors. France followed suit.

The air raid sirens had been tested frequently all the preceding year and we had been accustomed to their sound, but that first night of the war, as their dismal whine sounded, there came a tight feeling around the heart at the realisation that this time was no mere practice. It was sometime around midnight when the alarm went. One mustn't show a light, at least without heavy curtains, so it's no easy thing to find one's clothes, one's socks and shoes, no matter how familiar one is with the geography of one's room. I'm afraid as I hurriedly descended the stairs grasping my pocket lamp in one hand and my gas-mask in the other I shouldn't pass muster on any parade-ground inspection. It is remark-

able how experience teaches in these matters. I vowed that next time I'd leave my shoes and socks where I'd easily get them and that I'd take my heavy overcoat; it can be cold in the cellar even on a September night.

My shelter was the cellar of the college, one of the finest shelters in Paris save that it hadn't a second exit; this was fixed later. Nothing save a direct hit could damage it. It wasn't an official shelter, but a few of the neighbours came to it and, truth to tell, I wasn't sorry to have their company. The mouth of the cellar was covered with a blanket. This was the official suggestion to combat gas, and everybody believed that gas would be used. Water and electricity were turned off. We stayed put for an uneasy half-hour or so, expecting at any moment to hear the noise of gunfire or the sound of distant bombs exploding. Gradually curiosity got the better of me. I came up and walked around a bit, finally venturing to put my nose out into the street. It wasn't long until I was ordered into the shelter again: "The raiders were on their way". Another period of uneventful waiting and then the All Clear sounded. So to bed to resume interrupted sleep. Next day queues waited to read in the papers what really happened. The wildest rumours were going around. "The raiders had been interrupted and turned back. Twenty of them had been shot down at Meaux". The papers gave only what we ourselves already knew, and that was precious little. I was convinced that it was just a trial to see how things would go in case of a real alert. The day passed somehow or other, with everybody swapping his or her experiences of the alert.

Next night the sirens sounded again and I descended once more to the cellar, a little more expeditiously this time and better prepared against the cold. Again nothing happened and everybody returned to bed once more, just a little sceptical about raids. Next day the papers said an enemy plane had crossed the line, going west. It was probably only a reconnaissance plane.

For a fortnight or so nothing extraordinary happened. People began to settle down to work normally again. Everybody going about the streets carried his gas-mask lest the danger come upon him like a thief in the night. Then one bright sunny day, about mid-November, I remember well I was shaving in my room. There were workmen on the roof of the college. Suddenly a battery of anti-aircraft guns, which were located in the Luxembourg gardens not half a mile away, opened up on an aeroplane which was droning leisurely overhead. A minute or two later the sirens went and we descended again to the cellar. No bombs were dropped, but it was not consoling to know that they could have

been, long before any warning was given. After that incident there was nothing of importance for a long time.

The "Phoney War" developed. The people in charge of ARP came to me and asked for the use of one of the halls and a couple of small rooms during the day, and I gave them these. They installed a centre for fire-fighting, etc., there. In December 1939 I got permission to come to Ireland to see about serious matters relating to the college and students. The journey home was very uneventful, save that it had the usual discomforts of war-time travel and examinations. After a few weeks stay in Ireland I returned to Paris. Again the journey was uneventful; the only thing that stands out now was the heavy snow and frightful cold. When I arrived in the college the thaw had set in and pools of water lay on the floors and corridors. The central heating could not be used and, in fact, it was burst in many places by the frost. However, I had sufficient wood and coal to keep a fire going in my room and I soon made myself fairly comfortable. Again, up to the time of the invasion of the Low Countries things went on quietly, though uneasily. There was no scarcity of anything. The cafés, theatres and cinemas were crowded. The blackout was lessened considerably and people had ceased to carry gas-masks. All the time, however, the French believed that their armies would easily master the German. They were soon to get a rude awakening.

First the conquest of Holland and then the collapse of Belgium, with the encirclement of the British Expeditionary Force, opened their eyes to the reality of affairs. On the morning of the invasion of the Low Countries the first real raids on France took place with the bombing of French aerodromes. The sirens went that night. Again we dressed, but this time I stayed overground to await events. It was just breaking day when suddenly from the west appeared a German bomber in the sky. I saw him for a few moments without knowing whether it was friend or foe until the guns opened up. Then we made a hurried descent to the cellar. The alert was a long one but no bombs were dropped on Paris. Next day we heard of the invasion of the Low Countries. For several days there was little or no reliable information, but gradually the impression grew that things were going badly. Of course it was said that the Germans were suffering enormous casualties in men and material. Then came the encirclement of the British army, the collapse of Belgium and the flight from Dunkirk.

By that time I had written home asking what I should do in the case of an advance on Paris and got the reply that I might come home if the

situation seemed hopeless. The advance on Paris was not long delayed, for the French armies offered little resistance. I was in constant touch with the Irish Legation. The staff, Messrs Cremin and O'Byrne, as well as the Minister, Mr Murphy, were very kind to me all through. During the first days of June streams of refugees from the north and east filled the roads to Paris and beyond. Paris itself began to evacuate, and the situation on the roads became increasingly more difficult as the Germans got nearer. Reports of bombing and machine-gunning from the air were current but I think there was little truth in them. Certain roads were reserved for military traffic and the refugees had to take the secondary roads.

After the first week in June it was obvious that nothing could halt the Germans. I saw the Irish Minister on the 8th or 9th of June and he told me that the Legation were preparing to leave Paris as the French Government were leaving. He advised me to leave and go back to Ireland, and offered to take me with him in his car. Meantime he gave me an official notice, which I affixed to the door of the Irish College, that the building was Irish property and therefore not to be molested. Then I gave charge of the college to a French servant, who had always been found trustworthy, and prepared to await word from the Minister. On the evening of 10th June he told me to be ready at six next morning.

I don't think I slept that night. The AA guns were going off and on all through the night. At eight o'clock Mr Cremin called for me in his car. The other members of the Legation were travelling in the Minister's car. We had also a share of the office papers, etc. It was a beautiful sunny morning, but a thick fog, which was then inexplicable but which we heard later was the smoke from burning dumps of petrol, descended on the city like a great blanket. We joined the stream of refugees, and what a sight it was! Bumper to bumper, cars and lorries and cattle and waggons of all kinds, transporting all that people could hurriedly get together. Sometimes I saw a bird in its cage hanging on the side of a cart. As far as the eye could see, before and behind, the stream wound its way slowly, very slowly. Indeed, it was getting on to four o'clock before we reached Chartres. At that point the Minister sought permission to take the military road as a diplomat. Permission was given, and from then on our going was much faster. Occasionally we came upon disorganised-looking groups of French soldiers building road blocks, but everything seemed to be in great disorder. Innumerable French officers seemed to be transporting their families out of the

danger zone. Indeed I heard that not a few of them requisitioned cars for that purpose. At Châteaudun (I think it was) we got a little to eat, not without great difficulty because the hostess explained that she had scarcely anything left because of the demands of the refugees. Nearing Tours, our objective for the night, we ran into a military party near the aerodrome. They were holding up all the cars for examination. One of the soldiers was preparing to fire on the Minister's car, which had not seen the sign to halt, when our second car came up. We showed our papers and were allowed to proceed. It was nine o'clock or so when we arrived in Tours. After some delay, and not a little difficulty, we got a bed in the Hôtel Universal. There was an air raid but we were too tired to bother much about going to the shelters.

Next morning I said goodbye to the Minister and his staff, intending to take the train to St Malo and then the boat to England. The Minister was continuing to Bordeaux with the Government. I said mass at the CM house in Tours. Then I went to get my passport visaed by the military for leaving France. This was a mistake, as it took a day. The next morning when I presented myself at the station I found that all trains were suspended. The station was crowded with refugees seeking conveyance to the south and west. I returned to the house. The only occupants were the superior and his housekeeper. He was eighty years of age, and a day or so after my arrival he set out to do some work about thirty miles away. I continued to go each day to the station bringing my luggage with me. It took a considerable time to get any information at all. It was always the same: "We don't know when the service will be resumed". In fact it wasn't resumed until after the armistice. Each day I returned again. The Germans were approaching nearer each day and the housekeeper was threatening to throw herself into the Loire.

There was a house of our Sisters on the other side of the city which had a school and orphanage attached. They needed a chaplain and had rooms for him to live in. It was most fortunate for me and they were happy to have someone to say mass for them. They housed some of the refugees who had been unable to get any further. During the days of waiting the town of Tours suffered a few raids but only a few bombs were dropped and not much damage was done. On one occasion a raid occurred as I was at the station. The place was packed with refugees and the underground shelters could not possibly hold a fraction of them. I just got to the door of the shelter and when I saw the packed mass of humanity within I decided to stay at the door. Two German bombers dived down on the main bridge over the Loire. I could see them quite

clearly as they dropped their bombs, for it wasn't more than a quarter of a mile away; the only opposition seemed to be a couple of machine guns. However, they did not hit the bridge, and disappeared. A couple of days afterwards the retreating French blew up this bridge, and with it the aqueduct supplying the city. From then on we were dependent on wells. I happened to be very near when the bridge was blown up and it just sounded in me the depths of despair.

Food was fortunately fairly plentiful as Tours is the centre of a rich farming country. We now sat down to await the arrival of the Germans. There didn't seem to be any other prospect. The French first declared Tours an open city and then defended it, the River Loire being the line of defence. The crackle of machine guns was the first announcement that the battle had begun. For two nights and one day they shelled the French position on the south bank. The shelling was uncomfortably close; I was no more than a quarter of a mile from where the shells were falling, but I must say their shelling was not in any way indiscriminate. The houses on the bank near the bridge were set on fire, including the printing house of Mame. The fires spread and a good portion of the city was destroyed.

During the shelling I spent long periods in the cellar. It was full of people, men, women and children, some eating, some praying, some crying. At times I came up to sit in the garden, or lie down in my room from sheer weariness. In the morning of the second day there was a great silence. I said mass in peace and, after an early breakfast, went out to find the Germans in the streets. They didn't seem to be the barbarians the French expected. On the whole they conducted themselves modestly as victors, and with great propriety towards the inhabitants. Soon the French got to engaging them in conversation. All the best hotels and a number of villas were requisitioned and the occupation began.

For some days I went around looking at the damage done by the shelling and the fires. The Germans quickly performed temporary repairs to the span of the bridge destroyed by the French. Their troops were pouring over it continuously in pursuit of the retreating French. There was now scarcely any resistance and French people were waiting and hoping for the end. To those with whom I was in contact the signing of the armistice was a relief. For more than a month I waited in Tours before I could get a means of conveyance back to Paris. I knew then, of course, that there was no possibility of getting home to Ireland.

About the middle of July I fell violently sick with stomach trouble. I think it must have been the water, for this wasn't too good following

the blowing up of the aqueduct. However, on 26 July I was sufficiently recovered to travel. I was fortunate in getting a place in a van which was taking back a number of Sisters of Charity to Paris. These had been evacuated to Bordeaux and were returning after the armistice. On their way to Tours the previous day the van had overturned, two of the sisters being injured and taken to hospital. This left some room in the van and they offered me a lift, which I gratefully accepted. We reached Paris about seven o'clock after a very slow journey during which we had to purchase some petrol from the Germans. On my return to the Irish College I found everything as I had left it, with the ARP people still carrying on, but under German instructions now. I would have saved myself a lot of trouble if I had remained in Paris.

I was not very long back when I received a visit from the Irish Minister, Mr Murphy, and the Secretary of the Irish Legation, Mr Cremin. They had been trying to get some news of me; in fact they had thought that I had left for Ireland, while in Ireland there was no news of me. The Nuncio in Vichy had also been trying to find out what had become of me but with communications as they were it was not surprising that they hadn't heard of me. However, Mr Murphy undertook to send a wire, through America, to say that I was all right.

During Mr Murphy's visit word was brought that a German officer was downstairs and wanted to see me, as he was going to requisition the college. Mr Murphy and Mr Cremin came with me to see the officer, who was accompanied by a few soldiers and a French civilian. The officer knew little French and we knew no German. The Frenchman was trying to convey to the officer that the college was British property. We strenuously maintained that it was Irish property and that Ireland had remained outside the war. I think the officer got tired of the argument. At any rate he went away under the impression that we were expecting our students back in September. That seemed to satisfy him. Never afterwards did the Germans seek to interfere with the college.

Various French organisations sought, during the course of the subsequent three or four years, to get into the college. The housing accommodation was an acute problem. One request from a French seminary was referred to the Irish bishops. Their permission was obtained, but because of various difficulties they never availed of the permission. All the time the ARP continued to use a few of the rooms. Then a request was received from the local food authority to use two or three of the largest halls as store rooms for food supplies in case of an emergency. I granted this request on my own authority. Apart from the

fact that it was for a humanitarian purpose it also ensured that the place was not sought for less desirable purposes. In all, about three hundred tons of food was stored there up to the time of the evacuation of Paris by the Germans.

With the occupation commenced many restrictions. Milk became unobtainable, butter, eggs and meat very scarce and very dear. For a short while clothing and footwear were not rationed, but the Germans soon bought up most of the stocks in the shops and then they became practically impossible to get unless you knew somebody in the business. The Metro was the sole means of transport in the city. The Germans took over most of the hotels. Generally they behaved very well. Soon some of the civilian population began to collaborate and the Germans began to organise French labour and French industry to suit their war machine. A drastic system of rationing for practically everything was introduced. The blackout, which under the French was lax, was soon tightened up under German control.

In August 1940 I was called to the door to see a German officer. Speaking in perfect English he asked me if I were Irish. Then he told me that he had been fifteen years in Ireland, as organist and professor of music in Carlow. He was a very nice fellow. He told me that he had a bet with a fellow officer of six bottles of champagne that the Germans would be in London in three weeks. He was bubbling over with optimism. He liked the Irish, he said, but he couldn't understand their dislike of Hitler. He had a great admiration for the latter, though he did not like the Nazi methods; for instance, in the way they influenced and controlled his own children. He was frank enough in his talks and I could say anything I liked to him. His job was to interview prisoners and collate their replies for superior officers; intelligence work. I found out, though later, that on a number of important things in the course of the war his knowledge was lacking. He came to see me many times, mostly at night fortunately enough for my subsequent safety. I saw him before he set out for Russia, and a year after he had spent a winter there. He was a changed man physically. Though still confident of the outcome of the war he did not minimise the hardships the Germans themselves had to bear. I saw him once more, for the last time, some six months or so before the Allied landing in France. He was at that time convinced that Germany would be beaten. I never saw him after that, but I heard that he died of heart trouble before the conclusion of the war. His brother was a Jesuit and had been interned by the British in Africa.

In the Autumn of 1940 food became scarce. Apart from the amount

that the Germans consumed or exported to Germany there was difficulty of transport for what was available. Plot-holders around Paris increased numerically to a vast number, and every little garden in the city itself was utilised to grow vegetables. The garden of the college is fairly ample but a good deal of it is under cement. There is a hard tennis court and a ball alley, and a walk around about, so that there was only a small part, which was formerly used as a croquet court, available to cultivate. This at first seemed a barren enough prospect, for there was little soil and it was full of stones. However, I dug it up with pick and spade and raked out the larger stones. There was a row of trees flanking this piece of ground and I cut the tops off these and practically all the branches. This gave air to the garden and also ensured that the vegetables would get the benefit of the sun. I made the acquaintance of one of the gardeners in the Luxembourg gardens, which were quite near. He had his own plot outside Paris and was growing his own vegetables. He was as decent a Frenchman as I ever came across. He got for me eight lorry-loads of good soil and four lorries of decayed leaves, an excellent manure for the garden. I found it very difficult to get seed potatoes and it was rather late in the season of 1941 when I got about a stone and a half. During the winter of 1940 and early spring of 1941 I had prepared my garden by judicious mixing of good soil and leaves with what was already there. I had, moreover, prepared a seed-bed where I grew my own plants of tomatoes, salad, cucumber, vegetable marrows and Brussels sprouts. The business of watering the garden was, perhaps, the most unpleasant part. Everything else was very interesting. However, I had about a twenty yards length of hose and jet which helped considerably. The first results were salad and radishes. I had an abundance of the former and gave a good deal of it away amongst the neighbours. My carrots were excellent the first year. Onions were not so good. My broad beans were good. The haricots were very good and I had a good deal of them preserved for the winter. I had about a cwt and a half of tomatoes, which was considered very good in view of the fact that it was my first trial at them. I may say that these always succeeded with me, and each year afterwards to 1945 I had between eight cwt and half a ton of them. I gave a great deal of these to my neighbours, in some cases exchanging them for other things. My cook used to bottle a lot of them for the winter. The first year I had not more than about ten stone of potatoes. The following years I had three and four cwt. In addition I grew vegetable marrows, some of them weighing as much as three stone.

Apart from the fact that these vegetables were a very valuable

addition to the meagre ration allowed they gave me exercise and, indeed, absorbed my interest; for apart from the fact that I said mass daily for a community of sisters at five o'clock each morning I had little but gardening to occupy my time. The two or three months each winter, when gardening of any kind was impossible, I found hardest to bear. I read a good deal and retired very early to bed. The wireless was a great comfort, too, and I listened in to a number of stations, though listening to English stations was forbidden, and I was always able to get a truer picture of affairs than the French, who listened mostly to Radio Londres, the De Gaulle station in England.

About May 1941 I bought six hens, thinking that I would have eggs. However, this venture was not a success. Five of them died during the following winter without having laid an egg, and in all I got few eggs from the other. My cook, who had formerly been a concierge in the college, suggested that he should try his hand at rearing rabbits. In newspapers after the war it was sometimes said that I lived by rearing these. That's not strictly true. My cook carried out that part of our industry and was very successful. Sometimes he had as many as thirty or forty rabbits. Even though more than 50% died we always had plenty of them, though one can get tired of too much rabbit for dinner.

As I am on the line of food I can't pass on without saying a word about one who, in that matter, was a very angel to me, Miss Mary Maher of Laval. Of Irish birth she had been practically all her life in France doing works of charity. For the Christmas of 1941 I had had rabbit for dinner and when the Christmas of 1942 came round I looked around for knowledge of someone who could procure something better. I was put in touch with her. I asked her to get a goose for me. She sent me two. From then on she continued to send me parcels of meat, butter, cheese and eggs right up to the landing by the English and Americans, and again as soon as the Germans retired from Paris. I can never forget her generosity.

I got one or two letters from Ireland by way of Portugal. Very soon after the German occupation began the Diplomatic Corps were withdrawn from Paris to Vichy. From the establishment of the two zones I was practically cut off in communication with the outside world as nothing but printed postcards was permitted between them. When my passport expired in 1941 it was to Berlin I had to apply to have it renewed.

About the year 1941, too, I received a letter from the Germans inviting me to broadcast for them from Radio Paris and suggesting

that I should call to arrange about it. This was at the time that P. G. Wodehouse did something of that nature for them. However, I thought it better not to reply at all and the matter was not pursued further.

I remember on one occasion an Irish student was seeking a permit to cross to the free zone. He was living in the *département* of La Mayenne at the time and asked me to call at the German *Kommandantur* to expedite matters. I did not like the job but he had done me some favour so I called. The name of the student was David Conroy, and what amused me more than anything else was that the German's suspicions were aroused that he was a Jew. I think I succeeded in persuading him that he wasn't, but I didn't get the permit. Incidentally, all Jews had to wear a yellow star on their breast and they were forbidden to enter certain places of amusement, restaurants, etc.

For a very long time life was monotonous and hope of an end to the existing state was very dim. Each spring, of course, we all expected a landing by the English and Americans. The nightly bombardment of German and Italian towns affected us in Paris only to the extent that on the nights they passed over Paris we had the anti-aircraft guns in action for nearly an hour on the outward and return flights. In the morning we would pick up perhaps a few fragments of shrapnel. Nobody went to the shelters for these alerts and soon the sirens ceased to sound for them. Only on one occasion was an aeroplane hit over Paris. It fell in flames in the centre of the city.

About 1943 the Americans began to send large numbers of Flying Fortresses and Liberators over France by daylight. I witnessed one of these raids and it was thrilling to watch them as shells burst all around them. I remember the first time I saw them one of them was hit. It fell in flames, and what struck me was how slowly it seemed to fall, tumbling over and over. Another time when one of them was hit it descended to a very low altitude in an attempt to avoid the heavier guns. The Germans had established lighter guns on the roofs of many of the houses which they occupied. Though shells from these were bursting all around it it managed to get outside the city where it made a forced landing.

Early in 1944 the English and Americans set about the job of systematically destroying the French communications, marshalling yards, etc. They had not previously done much bombing around Paris, save for the destruction of the Renault factories. Now they began at the stations. Three or four of the bigger stations near Paris, including Porte de la Chapelle, were attacked successively. I will always remember the night of the attack on the latter. It developed with great suddenness. I

remember as I descended to the cellar my heart was thumping against my ribs, my tongue was stuck to the roof of my mouth and I felt weak at the knees. The shrapnel from the bursting anti-aircraft shells was falling in showers. The college seemed to be rocking above me. Though the target must have been nearly two miles away, as I learned a little later, I was convinced that the place attacked was not more than half a mile away. Besides the bursting bombs and shells the noise of the planes as they dived down on the target was terrific. Frankly, I was terrified that night. It continued for an hour or so and then we came up from the cellar. Sleep those nights was difficult. One of the most impressive sights of those nights was the lighting up of the target area by flares. It left the whole district bright as day. Five or six of the larger stations around Paris were attacked in this way, and the bridges across the Seine outside Paris itself were attacked.

These constant daily and nightly attacks indicated something decisive. Everybody was expecting a landing at any moment and the wildest rumours about the nature of it were current. Days passed and it didn't happen. When finally it did come, early in June 1944, people had partly given up hope for that year, and I remember well listening to London that morning. London was very guarded in its news. It merely said that the Germans announced an attempted landing of the Anglo-American forces. I told the news to some of my French friends, but they had been so often disappointed that they were doubtful. About ten o'clock that same day it was confirmed from London, but still the extent of the attack was not evident. However, as day succeeded day it became certain that the long looked-for invasion had commenced in earnest.

The German soldiers in Paris did not give any outward sign of being perturbed by the situation, and the French population as a whole, in my experience, awaited passively their own liberation. Probably any attempt at revolt at that early stage would have been ruthlessly put down and might have accomplished little good. When, after some weeks of severe fighting, it was seen that the invasion was to be successful, and the advance of Patton's army became spectacularly swift, the number of rumours of all kinds grew. The ARP men were practically continuously on duty, though very few bombs fell on Paris. The head of the ARP in the college had given utterance for a couple of years to pro-German sentiments and he was cordially disliked by all the others.

As the Anglo-American forces neared Paris we could hear the German troops in the outlying posts blowing up their ammunition, but

we didn't know what the troops defending Paris itself would do. There were about ten thousand of them holding various points in the city. A few days before the liberation of the city was expected the city police barricaded themselves in the Prefecture of Police and in a few of the police stations, hoisting the French flag and firing at German patrol cars. The Germans attacked the Prefecture with tanks and armoured cars, but only half-heartedly. They were interested mainly, I think, in keeping their lines of communication open for their retreating armies. They attacked the Mairie of the 5th arrondissement, only a couple of hundred yards from the college, where the local police had collected about fifty prisoners, military and civilian. They shelled the Mairie from three tanks stationed in the Place du Panthéon. Naturally enough the people round about were terrified, and some of those who were most vociferous about what the French would do when the time of liberation came were arrant cowards when brought up against actual fighting. I remember there were about half a dozen men in shirt sleeves and singlets at the college corner firing an old revolver at passing German motor cars about whose coming they were warned by whistle. In case of any show of strength they put their revolvers in their pockets and walked away apparently on other business.

For two or three days this kind of thing went on and the liberation forces did not make their entry. Most of the French civilian population were wishing that the rising of the police had not taken place. On the second day the police withdrew from the Mairie in the Place du Panthéon with their prisoners. They had no place to put these and I was approached to allow them to be housed in the college. I pointed out that there were two or three hundred tons of food in the place and that to place the prisoners in the college would invite attack by the Germans and the probable destruction of the food. Fortunately they did not persist in their demand.

After a few days the Anglo-American forces entered. The Leclerc division of the Free French passed up the rue d'Ulm and the soldiers were tumultuously received by the French people. At the same time there was a good deal of sniping from rooftops, and the rattle of machine-gun fire was practically continuous. This was mostly the work of the French collaborationists. Most of these were rounded up in a few days. I remember seeing two terrified Asiatics, whether Chinese or Japanese I do not know, being led handcuffed through the rue des Irlandais under a civilian guard. I heard later that they were perfectly innocent students who had nothing at all to do with the war.

On the first night of their arrival Leclerc's division camped in the Jardin des Plantes not very far from the college. The Germans bombed the place that night. The Halle aux Vins was severely damaged by fire. Some bombs fell in the rue Monge and some windows were broken in the college but no other damage was done. Next day I went out to see some of the scenes of recent street fighting. The Place du Pantheon and the rue Soufflot were strewn with broken glass but there did not appear to be much more damage done. I came across a few American cars parked near the Mairie surrounded by a crowd of French people looking for cigarettes. I was dressed as a French abbé in soutane and chapeau. I got into conversation with one of the American soldiers and before I was two minutes talking to him he asked: "By the way, Father, what part of Ireland are you from?" Though he had never been to Ireland he recognised the accent, for his father and mother were from Co. Roscommon.

The German garrison surrendered after a very brief resistance and not a great deal of damage was done to the buildings they occupied. Then the college became a hive of activity. The food was distributed as quickly as possible. Indeed a few more days and the means of communication by road were practically restored and supplies could come in from the country. The Americans were warmly received, but always there was the expectation that they would relieve the wants of the people. In my opinion the French did not do a great deal to relieve their own want.

It wasn't many more weeks until I was able to get news from home. First it was a visit from an English girl, a WAAC, who had been asked to get some news of me. Then the visit of Fr Henry Casey CM and letters from Ireland, but after a long delay of course, because the war continued.

I had still another winter of war to put in, but now under far different conditions. It looked as if the war in Europe could not last many more months. The danger of air-raids was practically nil. Soon another problem arose. The French prisoners of war were being repatriated early in 1945 and local bodies in Paris were organising reception centres where these could be lodged and rested for a few days before departing for their homes. I was approached in February to give the college for this purpose. I consented, on condition that certain repairs were carried out to electrical and plumbing installations.

The first prisoners to arrive were Dutch. These remained for a fortnight and then were sent elsewhere. After that we had a consignment

of Polish officers, very good Catholics all of them. They had mass on Sundays in the open air in the *cour.* These left after about three weeks. Although it was intended that the college be used for French prisoners of war very few Frenchmen were, in fact, received there, and this was a source of great disappointment to the local organising body. They left early in June and made good some small damage that had been done.

Immediately afterwards another request was made for the use of the college. Everyone has heard something of the problem of displaced persons after the war, but very few at this distance could realise the magnitude of that problem to the Anglo-American authorities. Sister Morris, of the Sisters of Charity, an American citizen whom I had known in Paris before the war, was working in conjunction with the American army authorities for the relief of some of these. One of her great difficulties was housing accommodation. She asked me to give the same facilities to the American army as I had given to the French local bodies. I got in touch with the American army authorities and agreed to let them have the use of the college for the period they needed it; they specified three to six months. They agreed to leave it in at least as good a condition as they received it.

On leaving after six months occupation they put everything in order and left a certain amount of their own equipment behind. I had from Brigadier General Alien, of the US Army headquarters, a letter in which he wrote:

> It is appropriate at this time that I should again express to the Irish Bishops through you the sincere and warm appreciation of the US Army for their generosity in permitting us the use of the College as a centre for displaced persons claiming American citizenship. The premises have been ideal for the purpose. The loan of them was made to us at a time when it was next to impossible to find suitable alternative accommodation subject to requisition. No question of compensation was ever raised.

Later they asked my permission to place a suitable plaque on the wall of the college commemorating this event; I gave permission.

I harvested my potatoes and tomatoes. The latter were just ripening during the liberation and, while having lots for myself, I gave away a good deal amongst the neighbours. From that time I lost interest in the garden and thought how soon I might be able to get home.

After the conclusion of the war in Europe I applied for, and was

granted after much delay and formalities, a visa to return to Ireland. I think that some of the difficulties at that time were due to the fact that I possessed a passport issued during the war by the Irish Charge d'Affaires in Berlin. My previous passport expired in 1941. I know the English immigration authorities at Newhaven were rather suspicious of me.

Forum

EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES IN MAKURDI DIOCESE

In spite of the vocation boom in the third world there is still a great demand for priests all over Africa, and in Nigeria in particular. The fewness of priests compared to the population of the area makes the future of the Church in Nigeria very uncertain. Just as the population is increasing geometrically the Catholic population is also increasing. In 1975 the Synod of Bishops gave the Catholic population as 59 million in Africa. Today it has increased by over 50%. This rapid growth is witnessed in the area covered by the Vincentian mission team called the Permanent Mission Team. The team started its work in a parish in Makurdi diocese, St Bernard's parish, Okpoga. During Holy Week this year (1987) over 600 adult catechumens were baptised. From the number of catechumens in the parish register it is clear that the number will continue to increase.

With the growing Catholic population only two resident priests minister to the spiritual needs of the people. All the time they continue to stretch themselves to reach the people; four or five of the many out-stations would be served each Sunday. The other stations for weeks and months would be without mass or holy communion. The result is that they become a "Bible Church" and know little or nothing of the eucharistic dimension of our faith. Many out-stations exist nominally as the Catholic Church but they know little of the Catholic faith. For them the celebration of the eucharist has become something obscure and each year less and less attention is given to the eucharist. In short, the stations have become a eucharistless community.

Turning back to the New Testament we see there existed no eucharistless community. The eucharist was a uniting force among the early Christians. The Lord's Supper, or the breaking of bread, was done every day:

> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of the food with glad and generous hearts (Acts 2:46).

The role of the eucharist in the Church cannot be over-emphasised.

It is the most blessed sacrament of our faith. To bring this eucharist closer to the people and to make reception easier the bishop of Makurdi, the Rt. Rev. Donal Murray, asked Fr Paul Roche, who is in charge of the Catechetical Centre, to include in his programme the training of eucharistic ministers. These ministers would be responsible for bringing the eucharist to the people at least on Sunday. Fr Roche thought first of bringing the men down to the Catechetical Centre, training them and sending them back to their parishes and stations. He later considered what the parishioners might think. Some would think that this is a new Church where any married man can come up to distribute holy communion, a duty for priests. Others would think it a new Church within the Catholic Church. Many other problems would arise from this. He then thought it wise to begin by catechising the faithful. They, like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, would ask for the continual stay of the Lord with them. For more effective work the blessed sacrament would be reserved in the church where people could go and adore the Lord in his eucharistic presence. The presence of the blessed sacrament permanently in the out-station is very new to the people.

Fr Innocent Ejeh, of St Bernard's parish, Okpoga, invited Fr Roche to his parish for the work. Fr Roche and his Vincentian team, made up of himself (Director of the Catechetical Centre), Bro. Paul Odjugo (a staff member of the Centre), Emmanuel Onah (a seminarian on apostolic work) and myself. The team divided itself into two groups for more efficient operation. Having received the blessing of the bishop the team started its work in November last year (1986).

The mission was planned as a project of about two years duration, divided into different phases. The introductory phase of the mission included explaining the aim of the mission and how it came to be born. Many were not sure of what the team was out for. Some came to observe what was going on. Others came to see whether this was a Catholic group or another "Alluia Group". For some it is a surprise to see such a team "invade" their village for a project they know little or nothing about. One man said that it seems there is no more work in the big towns and they (the mission team) have decided to come back to remote villages to pick kobo kobo (money). However, the team knew what they were out for and they channelled their energy towards it.

By the end of the first phase many, if not all, came to believe in the authenticity and orthodoxy of our teaching. The possibility of reserving the blessed sacrament in their church was the only thing that remained very doubtful in their minds. The blessed sacrament usually is reserved in the parish station where the priest resides. "Its dwelling among us

must bring some special blessing" a man remarked. By this time the people had accepted the team members and this was clearly shown by their generosity. Like Africans they treated their guests with kindness and made sure they had more than enough at each meal. At a breakfast, looking at the "mountain" of pounded yam set before us, Bro. Paul exclaimed: "Is this for ten persons?". It took a lot of time to convince people that we must move on to the next station.

The second phase was a period of teachings on the eucharist: What is the eucharist?; its institution; its role in the life of the Christian; the eucharist and the other sacraments; the eucharist as a gift of love; and other related topics. These teachings were closely followed by apt illustrations and visual aids. One remarkable thing at this stage was that many who had stayed away from the eucharist came back to receive, having been reconciled in the sacrament of penance. One woman regarded this mission as the greatest thing that has ever happened to the Church in their village. Her friend standing beside her said: "and it will ever remain the greatest".

The other step in this second phase is the planning of the eucharistic oratory. This is intended to be a little oratory attached to the church building, capable of taking fifteen to twenty people at a time. It is in this oratory that the eucharist would be reserved. It would be properly decorated and conducive to private prayer and adoration. The reason for this separate attachment stems from the fact that the churches are presently used for meetings of all kinds, religious and social. In some places they serve as classrooms or school halls; in short, the church building is a multi-purpose hall. With the eucharistic oratory the people would not be deprived of the use of the church, especially in places where it is needed as a classroom or school hall. This idea has been accepted by all the stations and they have started making some adjustment to provide for this oratory.

In the third phase the course on the eucharist would continue. In addition there would be courses on the sacrament of reconciliation and the qualities of life expected in a eucharistic minister, taking the bible and the documents of Vatican II as our guide. This will help them in their choice of eucharistic ministers. After these lectures the people, with the help of the parish priest, would choose a suitable candidate, or candidates, for this work.

The candidate could be a man or a woman. For many reasons young men and young women may not be allowed if they have the intention of leaving the village later. It is likely that, after some time, a young man or woman would like to leave the village for the city to seek better employ-

ment. It would not be fair for anyone to stop him. A married man or woman, who has no intention of seeking employment outside the village, would be a more suitable candidate. A couple could be selected.

It is not strange that women distribute holy communion, because some of the Sisters in the parish help to distribute holy communion on Sundays. Some carry the eucharist to outside stations where, after the Liturgy of the Word, they distribute it to the faithful. The question of the acceptability of a woman eucharistic minister poses no danger to their faith. In some stations there would not be any problem in getting a man or a woman because some of them have distinguished themselves in every respect. Their election would be warmly accepted. In some other villages it is still difficult to know whom to choose. What is most likely to happen is that the stations that cannot elect any person now should not be rushed to do so. It is better to have the right person later than a non-qualified person now. Another possibility is to appoint a person from outside the village and make him come down on Sundays to attend to the people.

The fourth, and final, stage would comprise training the candidates and commissioning them. They would be brought down to the Catechetical Centre for intensive training as eucharistic ministers. They would be trained in the use of the sacred vessels, in how to keep the oratory neat and in order, and in how to distribute communion to the sick. There are lots of things they could learn during this period. Fr Roche has more details about their training at the Centre. It is very desirable that the ministers should read and write English in order to be able to read some of the liturgical texts.

After training they would be installed. Each of the ministers, accompanied by his people, would be installed by the bishop or his delegate. Many people during the last phase were beginning to ask questions about the nature of the ceremony. It would be a simple ceremony so that people would not see it as an ordination. Before this installation we hope that the blessed sacrament oratory would have been finished.

This is roughly how the project is organised. Each of these phases lasts for six weeks. For each day in each week the programme is arranged in such a way that the people would get time to do their farm work, since they are mostly farmers.

The day started with mass at 5.30. We have been very much impressed by the punctuality of the people at morning masses. The mass never started later than 5.30 any day, with the people in full attendance. In one of the stations where there is a secondary school the students also turned up for mass each morning. After mass there was a short talk of about

thirty minutes on the eucharist. While the people set out for their farms we visited the sick and brought them holy communion.

The evening programme started at 4.00 and ended about 6.00. The day rounded off with another short talk on the eucharist, which may be a continuation of the evening talk or be on other relevant issues. It ended with the rosary. There was time during the week for consultation, and many availed themselves of the opportunity to clear some doubts about their faith.

The present team is big, but relatively small compared with the work ahead. At present some priests have invited us to come over to their parish. We would be happy if the bishop constituted one or two more teams to begin the work elsewhere.

Urban Chidi Osuji

VINCENTIAN STUDY GROUP 1987-88

Once again there were five meetings:

October, in Castleknock:
Brian Mullan on the first half of the letters to confrères in Volume I of the English translation of St Vincent's letters.

December, in Celbridge:
Eamon Raftery, on the remaining letters to confrères in Volume I.

January, in All Hallows Renewal Centre:
Bill Clarke on St Vincent and Foreign Missions.

February, in All Hallows Renewal Centre:
Roderic Crowley on St Vincent and the "mystery" of the poor.

March, in All Hallows Renewal Centre:
An open forum to evaluate the work of the Group over its first five years and to discuss its future development.

Because of the meetings of the Task Forces in preparation for Convocation there will be no meetings of the Group during the year 1988-89. The next meeting will be in October 1989 to open the 1989-90 season.

Tom Davitt

Miscellanea

EDWARD FERRIS

Since publication of my article on Edward Ferris in COLLOQUE No 7 I have come across a few further minor, though interesting, details.

In the archives of the Roman Province there is a large manuscript volume entitled: *Memorie del la Congregazione della Missione dalla Morte di Monsieur Cayla, Sup. Gen. X, all' elezione di Monsieur Du Wailly, Sup. Gen. XI,* Tom. X (Ref. No. 14.5.15). On page 3 it records that Cayla, Ferris and Le Sour (sic) on arrival in Rome stayed first at the CM house of S Andrea a Monte Cavallo and only later went to that of Monte Citorio.

Lucien Misermont CM in *Saint-Lazare et le Serment de Liberté-Egalité,* Perigueux, 1914, pages 8 and 17, shows that Ferris did not take the oath of Liberte-Egalite.

I had often wondered, while doing research for my article, what contacts, if any, Ferris maintained with confrères after he took up his post in Maynooth in 1799. In *Memoires de la Congrégation de la Mission: La Chine,* Tome II, Paris, 1912, there is a letter from Lazare-Marius Dumazel CM, from Canton, China, to Augustin Delgorgues CM in Altona (in Denmark at that period), dated 15 February 1802, in which the following occurs:

> Letters from Rome give us the news... that Fr Fenaja, Visitor of the Roman Province, has been appointed Assistant of the Congregation in place of Fr Ferris who cannot carry out the functions of that office, being in Ireland (page 280).

Later in the same volume is another letter from Dumazel to Delgorgues, dated from Canton 9 January 1804, in which the following occurs:

> I am enclosing in the package to you a letter for Fr Ferris. I have no doubt at all that if you ask the excellent Lady Clifford to confide it to someone she knows in England our revered confrère will be sure to get it. Ask Her Ladyship to forgive the liberty I am taking in making use of her influence (page 304).

Elsewhere in the volume there is mention of the fact that Lady Clifford was in Altona in 1801. It is not clear how Dumazel or Delgorgues knew her, but an English church historian informs me that "Lady Clifford, as one of the *grandes dames* in English Catholic society, had a finger in every ecclesiastical pie".

THURLES OR ARMAGH?

On 9 January 1861 the Provincial Council discussed a request from the archbishop of Cashel for the Province to take over the running of St Patrick's College, Thurles. Eight days later two of the Council, Thomas McNamara and Peter Duff, went down to Thurles to see the archbishop. They reported back to the Council on the 21st. They ennumerated certain difficulties: the college has lay students and day boys, the archbishop's ideas on administration would conflict with the authority of the superior, more men would be needed than the Province could afford at that time.

A week later, on the 28th, the Council again discussed the matter and were against taking it on unless the Superior General ordered them to. Their reasons against taking it on were: It would not be right to suspend missions in order to provide staff for Thurles; even if missions were suspended the missioners were not suitable for Thurles; lack of personnel.

The next meeting of the Provincial Council took place on 8 May 1861, and at this meeting it was decided to accept the request of the archbishop of Armagh to take on the running of St Patrick's College, Armagh; the question of Armagh had never previously come up at Council meetings. There is no indication as to why the reasons alleged in January for not taking Thurles were not equally valid against Armagh. Was it simply that the archbishop of Armagh had a brother on the Provincial Council while the archbishop of Cashel had not?

LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR IN ARMAGH, 27 SEPTEMBER 1861, TO THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Sir and Most Honoured Father,

Please give me your blessing.

A desire to receive your blessing made me anxious to write to you much sooner in order to communicate to your paternal heart our joys,

our hopes, & all the circumstances of our position and to hear from you in return words of benediction and advice. But we are, I may say, only established. I cannot allow this solemn anniversary to pass without performing this pleasing duty.

I am full of gratitude to our good God at hearing you are in good health. May God be blessed for this news, and may it long be so.

You would be filled with joy in visiting Armagh, as I hope & pray you soon will. This is the primatial see of Ireland. It was Saint Patrick, our glorious Apostle, who chose it for this honour and thank God it has continued unto this day. Here too the great St Malachy was born and educated and laboured for years. He laid his bones in the friendly soil of France. There are today upwards of 5000 Catholics in the city of Armagh, which contains less than 10000 inhabitants. This is the Province of Ireland in which the Catholics have suffered most and yet like the Israelites they have increased, and now after 300 years of persecution we are the majority. Blessed be God!

Such is the place the children of Saint Vincent have come. The Seminary can accommodate about 80. We have 56. About three quarters are Ecclesiastics. They come from the middle classes of Society. They are simple and docile.

The course of Studies prepares them for Maynooth, the Irish College, Paris, the Irish College, Rome, &c. Fr Kelly who is my only companion here is full of zeal. He has more special charge of the discipline and teaches a Greek Class daily. I have charge of the Farm of 60 acres, and general supervision. The other 3 Professors are externs, 2 Laymen & one priest.

The Primate is extremely kind to us. He is venerated here as a saint. He is now in much better health and is engaged in a remote part of his large diocese administering Confirmation. The priests are kind to us.

We hope, when our numbers increase, to give Missions - this is our great hope. When you kneel beside the sacred relics of Saint Vincent and in thought traverse so many seas & distant lands where your children live & toil, think of your two lonely and devoted children in the North of Ireland and give us your blessing. That blessing which gives courage & joy, and fruitfulness & maintains holy union - for Fr Kelly & myself I supplicate on my knees. May a spark of fervour from the Maison Mere come here.

Your devoted child in J.C.

Patrick Kearney, CM

A LETTER TO FR PATRICK TRAVERS CM

Armagh
27th April, 1973

Dear Pat,

I would like to join the Bishop of Meath, the Secretary of the Episcopal Conference, in conveying the deep thanks of the bishops for all you did for the Irish College in Paris, especially during the war. We were discussing the College at our March meeting and it was in this context that we recalled the fact that you had remained on in the College during the entire period of the war and the German occupation as the sole occupant of the College and without staff or central heating. We do realise that but for your loyalty and courage the fabric of the College, and our claims to it, would have suffered greatly and we are most thankful.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

W. Cardinal Conway

Archbishop of Armagh

A CORRECTION

In COLLOQUE No. 5 I had an article entitled *Some less-publicised facets of St Vincent.* A confrère from another Province has drawn my attention to something which needs correction. On page 14 I quoted an extract from a letter of St Louise which starts with the sentence: "Fr Vincent says you may go to confession to him". The necessary correction is that the pronoun "him" does not, in fact, refer to St Vincent. When I first ran across the quotation I verified that the reference (Letter 249) was correct but I neglected to check the overall context of the sentence. A pity, as it seemed such an interesting sidelight! Praesumptio cedat veritati.

TD

Father Martin Rafferty CM

Thursday 27 August 1987 was the last day of our golfing holiday. Four of us Vins celebrated mass in the morning. In our reflections after the gospel one of us remarked on a notice in the day's newspaper. A prominent Irish businessman had died suddenly. He was fifty years old. As is the style, the man's name and the value of his estate were conjoined in the headline. The words of Psalm 89 came into our reflection: "Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart". On arrival in Dublin that evening the words became piercingly apt when we learned that Martin Rafferty had been found dead in his bedroom in St Pat's, Drumcondra, in the morning.

Martin was fifty years of age. He was within months of the silver jubilee of his priesthood and within days of the 32nd anniversary of reception into St Vincent's community. It was a short life. It was also a graciously endowed life. During the requiem mass in St Peter's, Phibsboro, Martin's cultural and intellectual qualities were recalled. Our Province is poorer for the passing of one so gifted.

My memories of Martin run on more fraternal lines. Almost my first impression was of his love for music. He was a good pianist, though he preferred to play to an empty hall. He made up for this by being main organist in the Rock chapel. Many of the records in the Students' hall had his name written on in a schoolboy hand. Halfway through his student years he was touched by the ghost of diminishment. A long illness, which few of us understood, postponed his BA and left him frail and prone to tiredness afterwards. Martin did not enjoy bad health but he did relish this honourable retirement from non-voluntary football. He did, however, participate actively in the life of Glenart. He appeared on stage in the Christmas play each year. After his last performance, in *Dial M for Murder, I* expressed to him a wicked surprise at his fluency in the part of the slick, cock-tailed, cigarette-holdered Chelsea chap plotting the removal of a surplus wife (me). This, to my mind, contrasted with his earlier, less easy, portrayal of a cranky, skinflint west of Ireland farmer in *They got what they wanted.* I had imagined, I said, that the latter part would draw on his native Roscommon accents and require less effort. Martin enjoyed the impertinence. He enjoyed laughter and

fun."In laughter we touch an eternal order of Tightness and sanity".

After two years on the staff in Castleknock Martin was sent abroad to read education in Edinburgh. I was a student in London at the same time. From Scotland he made contact with me, a fellow exile, by letter. Vincent de Paul was a master in the ministry of letter-writing. Martin was Vincentian in this regard, as in much else. A good letter can change the day for someone, it can create a smile and bring joy to the heart. Martin's regular letters over the years were a mixture of humour, news, wisdom and kindness. In his last letter to me (in March 1987) he chid-ed my silence of one year (Martin expected his correspondents to participate):

> And when this creature was thus graciously visited by the uplifting word of his master's eloquence: in thought most beauteous, most amiable in godly sentiment; (and therein being much comforted), readily and sweetly a warmth in the bowels of compassion did overflow unto streams of thankfulness and divers expostulations of delight such as relieved his spirit mightily and, forsooth, delayed his repair unto the buttery and the modest repast of the mid-day hour! For it seemed that one who had been this twelvemonth lost (or, perchance, mislaid?) in Afrique lands had been newly discovered alive and he in full possession of his wits! Greater still must be the rejoicing in worthy households of humble clerks and right honest burghers (and some that be less so) when it shall be retailed unto them that he who once did sweetly insinuate sound doctrine, civil probity and elevating speculations (even, 'tis averred, in the midst of lewd, frivolous and ungodly pomps, shows and cinematographic performances purporting to amuse), this goodly soul should be returned unto them safe and well.

I know no confrère whose letters brought such mirth and enjoyment whether read alone, aloud or circulated among the brethren. His ministry of letter-writing was one of kindness:

> Is there anything I can do for you? Are there any tracts, handbills, posters, magazines, comics or digests that would ease Father's lot and draw his mind to the celestial realms of Tory orthodoxy?

He possessed the hawk-eye of a sub-editor:

> Please do something about that hilarious figure at the centre of the community crest at the top of your stationery - it looks like a duck-billed platypus.

For those unversed in primary zoology a platypus is an Australian egg-laying aquatic and burrowing mammal with a ducklike beak and flat tail. Martin would be glad to know that we have indeed done something about our stationery.

While in Scotland Martin used to escape from the chill of John Knox's Edinburgh to the warm welcome of Dermot Sweeney's Lanark. There they planned a post-Vatican II parish mission with a four to five man team. It was to last one week. It broke hallowed traditions by siting itself, apart from Sunday Eucharist to begin and end, outside of the parish church. In the light of years the enterprise was quite inspired: input and discussion groups convened in the hall or in people's homes, two evenings for street or locality masses in the week, an attempt to involve ministers of other denominations, home visitation of the sick. We invited allsoever to join us in our daily Evening Prayer (this was 1967; we did not yet have the Blue Books).This invitation produced not a solitary response; the four of us were left in this isolation to giggle our way through vespers like seminarists at their first *meditatio pomeridiana.* The mission was quietly successful and a second one was hosted by Fintan Briscoe eighteen months later.

For this we decided to move our publicity from high to middlebrow. Martin designed a handbill which the Team would distribute after all the Sunday masses. He included a faintly flippant sketch of each of us. There was "our only jailbird – as far as we know" (Frank Mullan); "our Oxford don" (Harry Slowey); "an accomplished musician" (me with guitar, which was both middle-brow and flippant). I cannot recall how Martin styled himself. The distribution went as planned. However, some of those solid Lanark Catholics did not enter into the light-hearted tone of the brochure. A few were puzzled. All the same, our team-spirit maintained its good-humoured zeal. I noticed Martin, by nature shy and a little reserved, flagging towards evening. After the evening mass and distribution he made a declaration of unstinted admiration for our missioners.

There were other experiments at retreats in which he participated in those exciting years, from which the retreat houses and teams evolved. All the same, I am sorry that the inspiration which launched the Lanark enterprise did not continue and evolve.

Martin was not terribly theology-minded. But he was gospel-minded. That wisdom, of heart which we prayed for in the psalm gradually took over his life. This in small ways as well as large. There were his visits with Vincent de Paul groups to the inner city; there was his interest in the seminaire and his weekly session in English (dubbed by himself as "Readin", writin' and spellin'") that was so much appreciated. And on the lighter side there were community outings for meals (and noteworthy here was his Saturday night cook-out at Castleknock), for days out of Dublin or for holidays.

There was the larger wisdom of heart as well. After doing his doctorate in Boston he was appointed as spiritual director in Clonliffe. He found the transition to this work, and to life in a seminary, difficult. It is a necessary task but often it feels aimless and thankless. "My role," he wrote to me, "seems to be a cross between performing icon and conference-breathing automaton. Everyone thinks you are 'a good thing' and (rather like plumbing, running water and sewage) every seminary should have one." But, significantly, he ended the paragraph on this apparently ill-defined, un-productive and un-rewarding job with this:

> Often when I am just about ready to write off what I'm doing the Spirit obtrudes and upsets the even tenor of my cynicism.

Shortness of life and wisdom of heart seem to me the pillars of Martin's life. In his short life were achievement, kindness and laughter. His life was marked with the cross of Jesus, of which he often spoke; the cross of physical frailty, the cross of restless loneliness, the cross of changes in Church and community and the cross of his "being led where he would rather not go".

I miss Martin's cheerful presence among us. I find it difficult, even yet, to absorb that he is not living with us. I know that when I absorb and accept the fact of his death there will remain an absence, a gap in the community that won't be filled. "Remember, Lord, those who have died…, marked with the sign of faith".

Padraig Regan CM

MARTIN RAFFERTY CM
Born: Roscommon, 2 December 1936.
Entered CM: 7 September 1955.
Final vows: 8 September 1960.
Ordained a priest in Clonliffe College by Dr McQuaid, archbishop of Dublin, 30 March 1963.

APPOINTMENTS
1963-1982: St Vincent's, Castleknock.
1982-1985: 4, Cabra Road (studies in Boston).
1985-1987: St Patrick's, Drumcondra (Clonliffe).

Died 27 August 1987.

Father Patrick Travers CM

"Ah yes, but Fr Travers is different". When confrères indulge in the very pleasant experience of reminiscing about people they knew and the name of Fr Pat Travers is mentioned everyone automatically reacts with the phrase "Ah yes, but Fr Travers is different". This is always said with the utmost reverence and, indeed, with a certain sense of awe. Yes, indeed, Fr Pat was different. He was different in a most attractive way. He wasn't different because he was aloof or removed. He was different because, like the Lord himself, everyone belonged to the table-fellowship of Fr Pat. There was room in his house for everyone, even for the over-liberal theologians, though perhaps he might good-humouredly say that they should be in the cellar.

Fr Travers was ordained in October 1931. I was his subject in the Irish College, Paris, when he succeeded the late Fr Sheedy as superior of the community and rector of the college. On reflection, what strikes me most forcibly is that there was not the slightest change in the *modus vivendi* of Fr Travers between the time he was a student in Blackrock and a superior in Paris. From my first experience of him in Blackrock I, and indeed all the seminarists of the time, saw in him the perfect example of the man who incarnated the five virtues of the community. But it was a most extraordinary incarnation, if I might say so, in the sense that Fr Travers never came over as the pious man who was a

standing admonition to the less favoured. The five virtues seemed to make of him the kind of person described in the second chapter of the letter to the Philippians: "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Again like his Master he seemed to have no interest in himself. In fact one way of annoying him was to call him Doctor Travers; he obtained a doctorate in theology in Rome after his ordination.

Pat Travers combined a delightful humanity with a deeply virtuous and self-sacrificing life. He was a kind of universal sportsman. He is famous, of course, in the community for his interest in croquet. Everywhere he went he set up a croquet court, even in Paris. Every conversation with him at his home base, wherever that happened to be, ended with the invitation: "Would you like a game of croquet?" The way in which he enjoyed croquet is a better indication to his character than volumes of biography. As I have said, he was a universal sportsman. He loved tennis, too, and was a most tenacious kind of player. One could never take it for granted that "Pat could not possibly return that stroke". During his very short holidays in his native Boyle he spent most of his time out with the gun shooting game.

But Pat was a deadly serious and conscientious man, and he showed these qualities in all the important posts he held in the community. Paris turned out to be the highlight of his priestly career. He taught philosophy and theology in the Irish College and was loved by the seminarians, and not because he in any way courted popularity. As one pastman once said to me: "He was loved because he was honest".

He ultimately succeeded the late Fr Sheedy as superior of the community and rector of the college. He was a most unobtrusive superior, but at the same time most effective. The source of his influence was, in fact, the integrity and simplicity of his character. His tenure of office was short because the war broke out after just one year in office.

But perhaps it was when the college closed because of the war that Fr Pat proved once again his enormous and incalculable worth. He spent the whole of the war period alone in the college as its caretaker; the only companion he had was the cook. He has written a wonderful account of his experiences during the war years in Paris. Who but Pat Travers could have put up with the isolation and loneliness of that period? It is a consolation for the rest of us that in fact he does admit to having been often lonely and, of course, terrified at times during the multiple air raids on the city.

But he tackled his loneliness in a most practical way. He became a first-class gardener. Those of us who are familiar with the Irish College often wondered how he could have possibly produced such a variety of vegetables in such a small area. But Pat Travers did it, and not only helped himself to overcome the isolation and boredom but also augmented the meagre rations that were available during the war. It has often been said that he also set up a kind of rabbit farm. He denies this. He says yes, there was a rabbit farm, but it was the cook who inaugurated it. In fact again he showed his humanity in the context of the rabbits too, because he says one can get very tired of rabbit every day for dinner.

He handled the different kinds of requests that were made to use the college during the war for different purposes. Even the Germans approached him at one period. But Pat warded them all off, and the only purpose for which the college was used during the whole period was to store food for the refugees and the hungry.

Another highlight in the life of Fr Travers was his period as Assistant Director of the Daughters of Charity. His honesty scored here, again, and one had only to notice the stream of Sisters from England as well as Ireland who constantly visited him in the later years of his life in St Peter's, Phibsboro. As I think we all know, Pat was very near to God and this did not go unnoticed by the Daughters.

Perhaps the most brilliant period of Fr Pat's life was the last twenty years of it, when he certainly underwent the agony of almost uninterrupted pain. This began when he had a prolonged attack of shingles in his head. He bore the excruciating pain with characteristic resignation and one seldom heard the slightest complaint from him. No sooner did he get rid of this source of agony than another even more prolonged one appeared in the form of an acute hip injury. The operation on the hip was unsuccessful and so Fr Pat was almost totally immobilised for almost twenty years. As he pushed himself slowly many times a day to join the community exercises he invariably produced a smile and a joke for those he met on the way. It is true that he prayed often that the Lord would take him to himself, yet, like St Paul, he was willing and anxious to accept the Lord's designs in his regard. He loved St Peter's and showed some reluctance to leave it towards the end of his life to be cared for by the Daughters of Charity at Rickard House. Eventually he agreed, and was very happy there. I went to see him a few days after returning from Ethiopia and, as it turned out, it was just a few days before his death. But, again characteristically, he said little about his

own illness; rather he was anxious to know how the Sisters were in Ethiopia. He, of course, knew all of them. One of them had given me a card for Fr Pat. As he was not able to read it himself I read it for him. He was clearly delighted to hear from the Sister, and smiled so graciously at her concern for him.

Fr Pat will never be forgotten by those who knew him, because something of the permanence of God seemed to surround him. He is greatly missed by the parishioners of Phibsboro. They quickly realised the exceptional worth of Fr Pat. May he rest in peace, and may he give us all a double share of his Vincentian spirit.

James Cahalan CM

PATRICK TRAVERS CM
Born: Gurteen, Co. Sligo, 11 July 1900.
Entered the Congregation: 28 April 1927.
Final vows: 1 May 1929.
Ordained a priest in Clonliffe College by Dr Wall, auxiliary bishop of Dublin, 4 October 1931.

APPOINTMENTS
1931-1933 Casa Internazionale, Rome.
1933-1945 Irish College, Paris.
1945-1952 St Joseph's, Blackrock (Maynooth).
1952-1960 St Vincent's, Mill Hill.
1960-1965 St Peter's, Phibsboro.
1965-1968 St Joseph's, Blackrock (Maynooth).
1968-1987 St Peter's, Phibsboro.

Died 3 September 1987.