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Contents

Editorial

This edition of Colloque is made up, in the main, of Sr Eileen Browne's dissertation for her Master's degree. I have included it primarily because of the interest of the topic itself but also because it is an example of the work being done in All Hallows' today in the 'Masters in Pastoral Leadership' course, because Eileen is a Daughter of Charity and because her approach (a case study) is a novel one in this arena. It has been published as one piece although some parts of the original work have not been included.

Rod Crowley follows Con Curtin's piece in the last edition on the Vincentian Heritage Month in Paris and Paul Roche has written on the situation in which he now finds himself as Visitor of the newest of our Vice-Provinces, Ss Cyril and Methodius, which covers some of the territories of the former Soviet Union.

The year 2001 marked the end of the Golden Jubilee year for St Paul's in Raheny and Frank Mullan, one of the founding Fathers, marks this with an article on those 'halcyon days'. It was also the year in which the relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux toured Ireland to almost overwhelming expressions of popular faith. Tom Lane uses this as an occasion to reflect on another, vincentian, expression of such faith, the Miraculous Medal, and to offer some ideas on the role of the medal and the future of such devotion in the Ireland of today.

In 2001, six confreres of the province returned, as our Catalogue says, to the heavenly homeland; John Hewson, Maurice Carbery, Matt Barry, Vinnie O'Brien, Gearoid O'Sullivan and Tommy Fagan. The obituaries of some have already been published; this edition has the obituaries of Frs Gearoid O'Sullivan and Tommy Fagan. The obituaries of Frs Tom Devine and Dermot O'Dowd, who have died in the Spring of 2002, will be published in the next edition.

‘Imagination and the Spiritual Journey – A Case Study.’

Eileen Browne DC

This work is the dissertation project submitted by Eileen as part of her work for the Masters of Arts in All Hallows’ College, Dublin, in 2000. It is published in much the same form in which it was submitted, only minor changes having been made.

Introduction

> What if imagination and art are not frosting at all,
> but the fountainhead of human experience? (1)

Chapter One – An Exploration of Foundations

The imagination is a faculty within the intelligence, which seeks expression. It is at work in a child at play; in an adolescent hoping to escape from the reality of this world; in each person searching to discover new means of creativity; and through life into adulthood where people long to give expression to their dreams for a more exciting way of living, amidst the day to day realities of life.

This chapter employs an interdisciplinary approach investigating related aspects of philosophy, the sciences, psychology and theology. The fact that these insights span the centuries from almost 400 B.C. to the present day is a testimony to humanity’s search to understand this inner power.

Philosophical Perspectives:

Plato and Aristotle reflected and wrote on the concept of imagination. In that pre-enlightenment period the imagination was granted merely reproductive abilities and focussed on the world of art and its sense of harmony with truth and beauty. According to Aristotle “the soul never thinks without a mental image [*phantasma*]”; (2) in the Greek tradition such images corresponded to the role that is enacted in contemporary cognitive theory by “mental representations”. Hence imagery, and thus imagination, had an essential role to play in all forms of thinking. (3)

Aristotle’s positive account of imagination as a motion arising in connection with sense perception, was firmly physiological in tone. During this early period, while imagination would not have been understood as being connected to the notion of creativity, it was however recognised to be related to “desire”. Aristotle argued that one’s desire

for anything not actually present to the senses must be mediated through an image of the desired object. Imagination came to be associated with thinking about things that are not actually currently present to the senses. (4)

Historically, Platonic "picture theory" advocated that visual imagery involved having entities, in the head or in the mind, which were like inner pictures, (5) and until quite recently this theory was almost universally accepted. (6) "Picture" here referred to copies in the visual mode relating to the basis of many discussions on imagery. (7) These pictures were understood as copies or remnants of earlier sense impressions, which were themselves picture-like.

Questions arising from these views were debated such as: does the mimetic quality of art copy what it sees or hears; does art create something new; does art lead the participants towards the divine? For Aristotle, knowing involved "becoming" what one knew through a "conversion to phantasm" (imagination). Only in the eighteenth century was imagination understood as a creative act. The eighteenth century thinkers focussed on how we know what we know and promoted imagination to a faculty alongside the intellect and the will. (8)

The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant suggested through, his distinction between the "productive" and "reproductive" imagination, an active role in human knowing. The former (productive imagination) made a unity of our sense experiences while the latter (reproductive imagination) completed the work of the senses by imagining what is unavailable. In the *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant's analysis of judgement of the sublime gave imagination a mediating role between speculative and practical reason. (9) A key description referring to Kant's analysis placed its importance in the very essence of humanity: "Imagination is an art hidden in the depths of nature…a blind but indispensable faculty of the human soul without which we would have no knowledge whatsoever". (10) He used several words, which could be translated by the word "imagination": "The most important of these is the word [*Einbildungskraft*] which suggests a power of making images, pictures or representations of things". (11) Kant's descriptions represented the transition between ancient and modern understandings of imagination.

The famous English poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, found inspiration in Kant's analyses. He suggested imagination was the source of poetry and of the creation of new images. He distinguished between the "primary imagination that operates in all perceptions and the secondary imagination that dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate". (12) He continued in his *Biographia Literaria,* (13) and firmly distinguished

between imagination and fancy. Primary imagination was "the living power and prime agent of all human perception." The secondary form of imagination "struggles to idealise and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead…"(14) For Coleridge, imagination was a participation in the creative act of God. (15)

The philosophers and poets of the Romantic Movement recognised the imagination as the primary faculty by which human beings got in touch with reality. The concept of imagination had played a key role in anti-scientific attitudes and ideologies with the writers and artists of the Romantic Movement giving it a central place in their ideology. (16)

Imagination is presented as supremely valuable and forever beyond the reach of scientific understanding; it is the guarantor and the embodiment of the alleged fact that science will never be able to illuminate "what really matters" in life. (17)

It was also perceived as underlying creativity, to the extent of enabling the person to "get in touch with the living truth of things". (18) Associated concepts like originality, passion, the unreal and also non-rational thought, regained a place of importance in the understanding of the creative thrust in the person.

For the English poet, William Blake, "…the human imagination… is the Divine Vision and Fruition, in which man lives eternally…" and the hero of his *Milton* announces:

> I come in Self-annihilation and the grandeur of Inspiration,
> To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour,
> To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration,
> To cast off Bacon, Locke and Newton from Albion's covering,
> To take off his filthy garments and clothe him with Imagination.
> (19)

The Romantics valued imagination highly and held it responsible for artistic creativity. The Romantics gave it its modern prominence and significance: as a consequence of their continuing influence creativity remains one of contemporary culture's most important values – in both science and arts. (20)

The 20th century philosopher, dramatist, novelist and political writer, Jean Paul Sartre wrote two books on the imagination early in his career. However, by the mid-twentieth century it had become quite an unfashionable topic and interest was invested in doubting its existence at all. For example, one British analytical philosopher, Gilbert Ryle, in his book *The Concept of Mind,* stated: "There (was) no special Faculty of Imagination, occupying itself single-mindedly in fancied viewings

and hearings."(21) This view became widely accepted. In some contexts imagining was referred to as "pretending" or thinking of a possibility. Hence a possible basis for a well-known contemporary phrase – "it's only your imagination", used when one is dismissing that person's stated view. Sartre saw imagination as negative consciousness, meaning that humans became distanced within the world of things.

The role of the image in mental life was defined by two classes of comprehension: "A pure comprehension (whether or not supported by signs) and an imaginative comprehension (which may or may not use words)."(22) For him imagination emulated consciousness as creative, but what it made was revealed as intangible.

The developments in the world of philosophy on the subject of imagination have been reflected upon in a book entitled *Poetics of Imagining.* (23) In this book Richard Kearney, a contemporary Irish philosopher, looks at the common threads running through various reflections on the imagination. (24) It is difficult to do justice to such a fine piece of work, however the following insights are an attempt to gather some perspectives for the purpose of this work.

The period Kearney writes about is from Husserl and Heidegger in the early 20th Century through the existentialism of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty to the periods of poetics (Bachelard), deconstruction, (Derrida, Lyotard) and hermeneutics (Ricoeur, Vattimo). (25) Kearney's exploration of the phenomenological dimension discloses imaginative consciousness reflecting upon itself. It reminds us that all radical questioning begins in our pre-conceptual experience of the life-world. It explores imagination as an intentional act of consciousness, (not a mental reproduction in the mind), which both intuits and forms essential meaning. Instead of imitating reality, the phenomenological dimension is committed to perpetual transformation. He quotes Giraud Bachelard who said this dimension "…established imagination in its living role as the guide to human life."(26)

A post-modern account of images and imagining is emerging. Kearney epitomises this account as a type of parody which:

> assumes that images no longer refer to some transcendental signified, be it outside the human subject as in Platonism, or inside the human subject as in modern idealism from Kant to Sartre… Images we are now told refer to other images. (27)

Kearney declares that the post-modern view dispenses with the established notions of origin, original, and originality and appears to "…circulate an endless play of simulation."(28) This heralds a crisis of

identity for imagination amidst the frenetic churning out of multimedia images from cinema, cybernetics, television and video. Images are created and often manipulated by advertisers and politicians, and illusion is marketed as reality. It means we do not have any definitive way of discerning the source of these images, i.e. humans or some anonymous mechanistic/electronic system.

The above historical view of the faculty of the imagination in philosophy glimpses a vast expanse of research, study and argument by philosophers down through the centuries. The imagination has been both rejected and lauded as having a significant place in the understanding of the human psyche. Even today it is the subject of debate and research in the world of philosophy.

1.2 Scientific Perspectives

Amid the wealth of research and explosion of information in the scientific world, the place of the imagination is being rediscovered. The following offers insights from the sciences of Biology, Physics and Mathematics.

1.2.1 Biology

Neuro-physiologists, working in the area of memory and learning, have identified the area in the brain that appears to process images. This area is within the limbic system, located at the tip of the temporal lobe near the hippocampus, and is called the amygdala. (29) The amygdala is an almond shaped structure which, among other functions, receives nerve signals from all portions of the limbic system as well as the neo cortex of the temporal lobes, the parietal lobes and the occipital lobes of the brain. It is especially sensitive to messages from the visual and auditory areas: Because of its multiple connections, the amygdala has been (described as) the "window" through which the limbic system sees the place of the person in the world. (30)

While the hippocampus functions in simple recall, the amygdala deals with "memory images", i.e. the work of the imagination. These can be described as visual and intimately related to memory. However imagination is not dependent on the visual as people may experience intense images triggered by smell, sound or touch. Studies on people who are blind from birth and who don't have visual memories attest to this. (31)

Access to the imagination is proving beneficial to the treatment of a number of medical illnesses. Recent studies linking medical illness and psychology have used imagery in an attempt to alleviate symptoms in chronic pain. The following is an example: in studies done in the

1990's, "warming imagery" was used and aimed at various sites of the body in biofeedback-trained patients with chronic pain. Upon demonstrating the ability to hand warm, the patients were exposed to an imagery exercise designed to increase skin temperature at trigger-point sites (i.e. of pain), which are small tender "irritative foci" located in the soft tissue. Biofeedback has the advantage of giving the patient a measure of control and encouragement as they can self-monitor pulse, respiration, body temperature and muscle relaxation through observing the electronic controls they are connected to during the treatment. In this study skin temperature, tissue compliance, and pressure-pain sensitivity were recorded before and after imagery intervention. The patients showed significant increases in skin temperature and muscle relaxation at the trigger-point sites and decreases in pressure-pain sensitivity. This suggests that localised trigger-point warming combined with imagery may be an effective adjunct in treating chronic pain. (32)

> Other studies in pain relief, using combined imagery and relaxation have been favourable in assessing patients with dysmenhorrea, tension headaches, haemophilia, arthritic pain, migraine and in obstetric care during delivery. (33) As well as pain relief other studies have shown the benefits of guided imagery and relaxation in alleviating distressing treatments, e.g. during chemotherapy to minimise nausea or during painful procedures in paediatric care. (34)

Two studies

In the area of general surgery, the effects of guided imagery on patients have been studied both pre-operatively and post-operatively. The following are two such examples:

> One study sought to determine whether pre-operative psychological preparation, designed to reduce anxiety, may sensitise cortisol and adrenaline (i.e. hormonal) responses to surgery. In a controlled trial of abdominal surgery patients, the effects of a pre-operative preparation that used guided imagery, (not just to reduce anxiety, but also to increase patients' feelings of being able to cope with surgical stress) were tested. Twenty-six imagery patients were compared with twenty-five controls who received, instead, background information about the hospital. The study showed that the level of anxiety was similar in each group, but imagery patients experienced less postoperative pain than did the controls; were less distressed by it; felt that they coped with it better and requested less analgesia.

> Cortisol levels were lower in imagery patients than in controls, immediately before and after surgery. Noradrenaline levels were greater on these occasions in imagery patients than controls. (35)

Studies have been done to analyse the effects of imagery on wound healing. The purpose of one such experiment was to determine the effects of an Audiotape series, employing Relaxation with Guided Imagery (RGI), on the psycho-physiologic stress response and wound healing in surgical patients. Twenty-four patients undergoing cholecystectomy (removal of gall-bladder) were randomly assigned to either RGI or control (quiet period) conditions and measured against three indexes of recovery: firstly, the level of anxiety, secondly, a hormonal level test (i.e. urinary cortisol levels), and thirdly, wound inflammatory responses. An analysis of variance for repeated measures revealed that the RGI group demonstrated significantly less state anxiety and lower cortisol levels one day following surgery; and less surgical wound erythema (redness and swelling), than the control group. (36)

> Both studies cited suggested that there is a significant part to be played by the use of guided imagery both pre and post-operatively in effecting a more rapid recovery rate following surgical intervention. This is in addition to a noticeably positive endocrine response by the imagery-led patients.
>
> In the field of general medicine and surgery it is evident therefore, that there is a growing openness to combining the healing benefits from access to the imaginative processes with the body's biological healing powers, in the pursuit of overall patient recovery and care. The imagination has its place in patient care.

Although psychiatry and psychology are disciplines that are closely intertwined, it is appropriate to introduce the relevance of some biochemical research on the mental processes at this juncture. Stanislav Grof, a Czech psychiatrist, began his research into the psychotherapeutic uses of LSD in 1960 in Prague. His work presented a perspective on the psyche as a dynamic reality. He believed "…LSD to be a powerful …catalyst of biochemical and physiological processes in the brain…" He suggested this drug facilitated "the emergence of unconscious material from different levels of the personality"(37)

Experiments using Meduna inhalation – a mix of 70% oxygen and 30% carbon dioxide – produced effects similar to LSD. Grof deduced

that anoxia to the brain was the cause of his observations. Therefore, he hypothesised that there is a link between LSD experiences and ecstatic experiences induced by traditional religious rituals, e.g. smokehouse rituals, mutilating rites of passage, tantric sex, near drowning experiences (baptism by immersion?) and also by the natural traumas of birth and death. (38)

As a result of his experiments and analyses of the phenomena, he defined four main kinds of experiences: 1) abstract and aesthetic, 2) psychodynamic, 3) perinatal and 4) transpersonal. In each of these experiences the person being analysed described various kinds of vivid imagery related to that experience. Grof recounted: "in persons who have had serial LSD sessions…experiences usually contain much psychodynamic material…"(39) His research suggests how the psyche is formed, being built layer upon layer. (40)

Grof, among others, refined Jung's studies on transpersonal psychology. Carl Jung was first to study this specialised area of psychology called Transpersonal Psychology. It is the extension of psychological studies into consciousness studies, spiritual inquiry, body-mind relationships and transformation. Transpersonal psychology now encompasses the study of the full range of human experience, from abnormal behaviour to healthy normal functioning, to spiritually embodied and "transcendent consciousness". (See section 1.4 below for further exploration of Jung's work). Grof's experiments offer some insights into the mystery of the unconscious as it yields up image material.

In 2000, William Marts wrote on the relationship between the physiological and mental processes within the mind/body connection. He coined the term "Imagintelligence" (from imagination intelligence). In his book of the same name he claims:

> Based on current research that demonstrates the image as the substrate of all thought, Imagintelligence takes you on a journey from the image, (that) occurs within the brain in response to your thoughts, to the chemical processes within the body that in turn influence emotions, moods, states of mind, perspectives, and spirituality…By focusing on our imaginings, we can intervene between the stimulus/response. When negative imaginings cease, illumination, enlightenment, or total peace may be experienced. (41)

From the foregoing the work of imaginative processes are to be found in aspects biology, medicine and psychiatry. Some of the medico-surgical

experiments combine the biological as well as the psychological responses of the individual. Grof's studies indicate the effects of specific chemical therapy on the psyche, on mental health as well as on the psychological processes. It would appear that these medical disciplines are increasingly considering the use of imagery in patient care.

1.2.2 Physics and Mathematics

The great discoveries in mathematics and science have resulted because someone was able to answer the "what if" questions. Fred Alan Wolf in *Taking the Quantum Leap* (42) credited imagination with enabling the development of quantum mechanics, a theory of how the universe behaves. Another physics professor, Roger S. Jones, in *Physics As Metaphor* (43) defined science as poetry and said:

> Physical scientists are trying to understand the meaning of life just as philosophers and artists do. Their tools are not any different: metaphors, images, symbols – the works of the imagination. (44)

In his work, the *Tao of Physics,* Fritjof Capra outlined his thesis that:

> The principal theories and models of modern physics lead to a view of the world which is internally consistent and in perfect harmony with the views of Eastern Mystics…(45)

He saw science and mysticism as two complementary manifestations of the human mind, the rational and the intuitive (including imaginative) faculties. (46)

In describing mystical experience he said that both the complexity of experimental physics and that of the Tibetan Mandala (see Psychological Perspectives; 1.3), were "records of enquiries into the nature of the universe". (47) Techniques used by the Eastern Mystics, e.g. Zen Buddhists, Taoists and Hindus aim to silence the rational mind and shift consciousness to the intuitive mode. For this they may use mantra, deep repetitive breathing, or visual art forms like the mandala. Scientists too are familiar with direct intuitive insights from their research because Capra said, "every new discovery originates in such a sudden non-verbal flash…"(48) In his chapter on the New Physics, he described the inadequacy of the mechanistic worldview of classical physics to contain Quantum theory. Of the new concepts he claimed, "their effect on the physicists imagination was truly shattering."(49)

In a later book, *Uncommon Wisdom,* Capra further paralleled physics and mysticism. In Zen tradition, a system of non-verbal instruction

through riddles called Koans, are used. Thinking rationally cannot solve them. They prepare the Zen student for the non-verbal experience of reality. Discovering the solution of these Koans awakens a new state of consciousness. Capra paralleled where physicists in the 1920's experienced quantum paradoxes, with Zen Buddhism, i.e. where the solution to the physicists problems are hidden in paradoxes that could not be solved by logical reasoning. The new awareness was that of quantum reality. Nature, like the Zen masters provided the riddles. (50) Capra further asserted in relation to 20th Century particle physicists, that:

> Like the mystics, physicists were now dealing with a non-sensory experience of reality…from then on, the models and images of modern physics became akin to those of Eastern philosophies.(51)

The famous scientist and mathematician, Albert Einstein, in his work on the Theory of Relativity (52), weaved insights from science, maths, philosophy and physics. This was one of his many contributions to the "why and what if" questions born of the imaginative processes. He is quoted as saying:

> There is only one admirable form of the imagination: the imagination that is so intense that it creates a new reality, that it makes things happen, whether it be a political thing, or a social thing or a work of art. (53)

It has also been said of him:

> Einstein knew that his imagination had played an important role in his discoveries … he was always ready to agree that inventiveness, imagination, the intuitive approach ...played a serious part in his work…(54)

In *Creating Minds*, Howard Gardner, an educational psychologist, while analysing Einstein's genius wrote:

> Einstein was fortunate, first, in that the questions he pondered during his youth turned out to be relevant to the physics of his day and, second, in that his gifts of spatial and visual imagination could advance his scientific work. (55)

The above exploration gives an indication of how the sciences situate the place of the imagination in their respective domains. The "marriage" of biology and psychology, in the area of psychopathology, recognises the value of accessing the imagination's potential in the treatment of

certain illnesses. Physics is discovering increasing complementarity with eastern mysticism; and mathematicians have found that imaginative insights have often heralded the brink of new discoveries. (56)

1.3 Psychological Perspectives

The discipline of psychology also has much to contribute to the exploration and understanding of the imaginative processes. For the purposes of this work aspects of one major psychologist's work will be examined – Carl Gustav Jung. In his work on the study of the Personal Unconscious and the Collective Unconscious, Jung developed a technique using tools of Visualisation and Imaging. His technique was namely "Active Imagination" – a process used to enhance interaction between ego and unconscious where the "imagination (performs) the work of the transcendent function…"(57) In his work *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* Jung explained:

> Active imagination…is a method (devised by myself) of introspection for observing the stream of interior images. One concentrates one's attention on some impressive but unintelligible dream-image, or on a spontaneous visual impression, and observes the changes taking place in it…It is the inhibition exerted by the conscious mind on the unconscious. (58)

Imagination employed in this way is not the same as fantasy. In this context it is distinguished from passive imagination, which is, in many ways, self-propelling fantasy.

> An aspect worth noting here, is in relation to states of consciousness, i.e. that "thinking in pictures" is closer to the…Unconscious and "Right Hemisphere" (of the brain) processes than does thinking in words (primarily conscious and "Left Hemisphere.")…(59)

Later in defence of the apparent simplistic nature of the imaginative healing process Jung said:

> Always when science tries to describe a "simple" life process, the matter becomes complicated and difficult…the details of the transformation process rendered visible through active imagination make no small demands on our understanding. In this respect they may be compared with all other biological processes…(requiring) specialised knowledge to become comprehensible. (60)

Jung's therapeutic direction was towards "Wholeness or Individuation". This accordingly, was best achieved by clearing the conscious of all preconceptions and images and by letting the unconscious speak to the conscious by means of images which the unconscious then projects onto the screen of the conscious mind. (61) He asserted that symbols and images emerge from different levels of the "Collective Unconscious" into the "Personal Unconscious" of the person. This work was later termed transpersonal psychology. Jung first coined the term transpersonal [*uberpersonlich*] when he used the phrase "transpersonal unconscious" as a synonym for "collective unconscious."

In Jung's experiments (1914) on "confrontation with the unconscious" he probed the depths of his own psyche. He was put deeply in touch with the power of translating emotions into images, as a means of calming the upsetting aspects of his unconscious work. He wrote:

> As a result of my experiment I learned how helpful it can be from the therapeutic point of view, to find the particular images which lie behind emotions. (62)

In struggling to integrate his spiritual perspective on the human condition, Jung described the God Image as deriving from a term used by the Church Fathers, according to whom the *imago Dei* is imprinted on the human soul. (63) He further claimed:

> It is only through the psyche that we can establish that God acts upon us, but we are unable to distinguish whether God and the unconscious are two different entities. Both are borderline concepts for transcendental contents. But empirically it can be established…that there is in the unconscious an archetype of wholeness, which manifests itself spontaneously in dreams, etc…Consequently, it does not seem improbable that the archetype produces a symbolism, which has always characterised and expressed the Deity. (64)

In the preceding section (1.2.2. Biology), reference has been made to the work of Stanislav Grof who further explored transpersonal psychology in studies on the effects of LSD on patients and also in the field of psychiatry. In relation to the human desire for the transcendent, Grof remarked in an interview in 1996 entitled "Has Psychology Failed the Acid Test?"

> Intimate knowledge of the transpersonal realms is absolutely essential, not only for the understanding of the psychedelic process but for any serious approach to such

> phenomena as shamanism, religion, mysticism, rites of passage, mythology, parapsychology and schizophrenia. (65)

For the purpose of this work and its theme, it is appropriate to introduce the particular art form used by Jung in his search for a "window" into the soul's sense of God or the *imago Dei* – the God Image. He found during extensive therapeutic work with patients that the God-image could express itself in the mandala. (66)

Mandala is the Sanskrit word meaning, "circle". Worldwide, various spiritual traditions use the mandala to focus and reflect the spiritual content of the psyche for both the designer and the beholder. This art form is used in Native American sand painting, Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist rituals and modern psychology. In Jungian Psychology:

> The mandala brings about healing in a type of psychological event called a crisis of transition. Here the ego fragments and is in danger of collapsing; the mandala forges a new relationship of the ego to the self. Art therapists and psychologists routinely observe that the circle plays a healing role in-patients with life-threatening diseases. (67)

Michael Flanigan, commenting on *C.G. Jung, Mandala Symbolism,* cites Jung as the pioneering explorer of the collective unconscious, and as encountering the mandala in his efforts to relieve suffering in his patients: "Jung's discovery of the mandala provided the key to his entire system."(68)

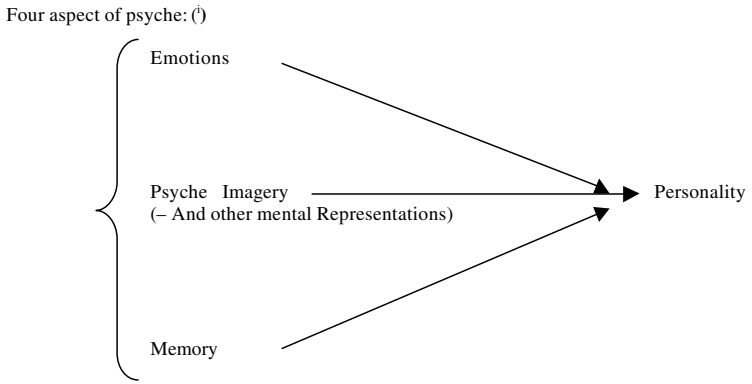
The mandala was an important source of healing for Hildegard of Bingen. She was a mystic, theologian, poet, dramatist, scientist and physician. From an early age she experienced spiritual visions. Later, as an abbess, she feared expressing these visions for fear of ridicule. She became very ill and was not cured until she had the courage to record her sacred visions in words and in painting mandalas. It was an unorthodox use of mandalic imagery given that she had never been educated in the school of the Tibetan Monks – the then contemporary authority on its use to assist meditation. However, it has been said that her prayer with the mandala demonstrated, even more clearly than the traditional practices, its potential for expressing spiritual truth. (69) Her creation-centred spirituality was rooted in her perception that:

> …humankind, full of all creative possibilities, is God's work. Humankind alone is called to assist God. Humankind is called to co-create. (70)

The contemporary use of the mandala in human development and spirituality groups is explored in a later chapter. For now, suffice it to say that in the area of transpersonal psychology, the access to the imagination is key in pointing towards a way of wholeness and integration of the Self as described by Jung. He concludes his appendix on the mandala thus:

> the fact that images of this kind have under certain circumstances a considerable therapeutic effect on their authors is empirically proved and also readily understandable in that they often represent very bold attempts to see and put together apparently irreconcilable opposites and bridge over apparently hopeless splits. (71)

Finally, before leaving this investigation on the psychological perspectives of Jung on the imaginative processes, a simple diagram by Daniel Helminiak in his work, *The Human Core of Spirituality*, (72) may help to map the place of imagination in the psyche. This book looks at the contrast between psyche and spirit – two distinct aspects of the mind. The following diagram is one model he uses and may serve to further illumine the concept in question in this thesis:



Three disciplines to date have been investigated in order to confirm the place of the imagination within different aspects of the human person: philosophy, the sciences and psychology. A fourth foundation acknowledging the place of the imaginative processes is within the discipline of theology.

1.4 Theological Perspectives

Imagination assumes an important place today in the theses of fundamental theology. "Revelation in any religious system, occurs within imaginative constructs – myth, symbol, narrative, sacramental presentation etc…so imagination shows itself as an irreplaceable power of knowing in its own right." (74)

Theological perspectives on the concept of "imagination" have undergone a turbulent history of attempts to grapple with this mysterious dimension of the human person. Francis Sullivan has asserted that:

> Imagination as the *imago Dei*, existed before the Fall. Without it Adam could not have named the animals, nor could he have cared for the earth. Perhaps it was imagination that drove Eve and Adam to sin – a curiosity to know more than they did at that moment. (75)

Throughout the history of Christendom, imagination was generally considered negatively, a dangerous faculty, liable to lead us into sin and error, and opposed to reason, which would lead us to God. This attitude persisted into the early modern period, even as reason was coming to be linked with science rather than religion. Nigel J. T. Thomas asserts that:

> Imagination was associated with the kind of magical thinking, which the new "mechanical philosophy" was struggling to overcome. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), mathematician, physicist, and devout Christian, was particularly vehement in this regard, characterising imagination as 'that mistress of error and falsehood,' an 'arrogant faculty, the enemy of reason'…(76)

Other mixed Christian attitudes towards imagination in earlier centuries determined that true beauty as perceived by this faculty could lead one to God. The safeguard was that it must be intellectual and not sensible. St Augustine recognised the dual energy in the "sensible". He mistrusted it as seductive and illusory, able to tie us down to earthly things, preventing our minds from contemplating the eternal. Art could mislead us, but religious icons, stained-glass windows, frescoes, statuary, and architecture could teach us doctrine and point the way to heaven. He developed a theology of beauty, derived from Plato and neo-Platonist thought, that saw human creativity, i.e. art, as having the ability to participate in the divine when it " shared in appropriate measure". (77) In his theology of the sacraments, he emphasised their objective effectiveness as signs, and their ability to convey believers to true inward faith.

Christian attitudes continued to reflect a wary respect for imagina-

tion's force. Eastern and Western Churches had many campaigns against certain forms of artistic display. Iconoclastic controversies disturbed eastern Christians from c. 725-842, deeming images of Christ could only represent His humanity. Hence without, the divine component, they were seen as idols – thus the destruction of all icons was ordered. After the 7th Council of Nicea, (787 AD) the reinstatement of icons was permitted as objects of veneration not of adoration.

In the specific area of symbolism, as a product of imaginative thinking, Thomas Aquinas attempted to provide a theory encompassing the concerns and questions of medieval symbolic life. By combining the Augustinian notion of signs with the Aristotelian causality, he offered an understanding of the effectiveness of sacraments: "The natural symbolism of the sacraments was the substrate for their supernatural transforming power."(78)

Later ongoing discussions saw sensuous images paradoxically as both access to God (in Christ, the Church and Sacraments) and as a temptation away from God by focussing solely on the senses. The author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* advises us to put all sensible reality below us in a cloud of forgetting: "God is able to be truly contacted in imageless and wordless wonder". (79)

Martin Luther, in response to the crisis of the practice of the faith in Wittenburg, wanted images to be removed from churches because of their inherent idolatry. (80) He felt that if the Word of God were preached, images would not be necessary. (81)

In the 20th century there have been theological moves to recover the values of imagination. Alongside psychology, theology recognised the imagination's ability to include the affective, moral, and cognitive dimensions. Maréchal studied the psychology of the mystics emphasising the imageless and wordless aspect of religious consciousness. (82)

David Tracy in his work *The Analogical Imagination* developed a systematic, confessional theology based upon an analogical imagination that is seized by the classics of literature and history. (83) He suggests imagination is the productive process of art. He goes on to say:

> For many, theories of the imagination have been hampered by notions of both image and the imagination as merely reproductive of some absent meaning…these theories tend to encourage reflection in the direction of some mere reproduction of a literal meaning, rather than in the direction of the production of meaning itself. (84)

He further describes imagination as the power of giving form to human experience.

Andrew Greeley has written on the "Catholic Imagination and Ireland" (1996). In this paper he suggests that poet Gerard Manley Hopkins defined the Catholic religious imagination, which may define Irish life in 1996. Greeley uses a circular model in which he proposes that religion:

> …begins in EXPERIENCES, which renew hope, is encoded in the preconscious (creative intuition, poetic dimension, agent intellect…) in SYMBOLS, shared with others in STORIES which are told to and constitute a story-telling COMMUNITY which enacts the stories in community RITUALS. (85)

In reflecting on Hopkins's poetry, he sees the Catholic imagination perceiving God as

> "…lurking in the objects, events, persons and communities of everyday life…"(86)

Later, Michael Paul Gallagher in an article "Imagination and Faith" (1984), establishes a case for imagination as a crucial vehicle for faith. Alongside the intellect and will as articulated by Aquinas, it is a third partner in the faith dynamic. What must be recognised is that faith is imaginative not imaginary. In quoting John Henry Newman, he recalls the example of a child's imaginative apprehension of God and argues that it is a paradigm of adult faith:

> it is rooted in an image, before it has been reflected on, and before it is recognised by him as a notion…faith first needs to become credible to the imagination before it can journey towards a fuller and more intellectual theology of faith. (87)

For Gallagher, it is through the medium of imagination that revelation can be received. He proposes that a theology of faith needs a different starting point than the one usually offered: "the *idea* of God must be replaced by the *image* of God…knowledge of God is not theoretical or objective but imaginative." He also proposes a case for the understanding of the

> God of the bible who seldom either argues or orders: instead He recites poems, stories and invites to freedom by way of images. Out of this revelation springs faith, a revelation where imagination is a central strand in the communication of mystery and its continued life. (88)

In a reflection on the month of November when the Christian community remembers and prays for its dead, Dermot Lane (1996), notes two

important elements of any theology of hope – memory and imagination. "It is memory that sparks off hope, and imagination that keeps hope in existence. (89) He goes on to recognise imagination as the "human capacity to construct a coherent world of meaning out of the connections that exist between a variety of different images…(an) innate and irrepressible capacity to image life differently and alternatively, (keeping) hope in existence…"

In a glimpse at the scientific imagination, Lane questions whether it could perhaps be "...a midwife to a revitalisation of the religious imagination?" In the developing cosmic story from astro-physics and current cosmologies, humanity is recovering an understanding of the fundamental unity of all of creation – the cosmos the earth and the self. The images being created may "help the religious imagination to discover the meaning of social solidarity, ecological responsibility and interpersonal communion."

In his later book *New Century, New Society – Christian Perspectives*, Lane defines the need for a paradigm shift in the search for a new imagination for faith in the 21st Century. He compares it to the imaginative change that occurred in the second century in the move from Jewish Christianity to Hellenistic Christianity. In our Irish culture of growing religious indifference and apathy described as a place where "God is missing but not missed", the increasing "yawn factor" is disquieting. "The issue of so much apathy …about the Christian message may ultimately be a question about the imagination. The existence of so much 'yawn' is itself a demand for a new imagination out of which the Christian story might be retold". (90) In identifying the pressure points on Christian faith he points out that the human imagination is one of the most neglected and misunderstood areas in contemporary theology. It is:

> a "bridge" between human experience, understanding and interpretation…(it enables) human understanding to take place and it is impossible for understanding to exist without the power of the imagination. (91)

By studying imagining and its products in an interdisciplinary way theology has learned to engage with not just philosophers but also psychologists and the natural sciences and thus affect our actions.

Concluding remarks to Chapter One:

Clear evidence exists of the struggle of various philosophers with the relevance of the imagination to the conscious mind. It has endured exalted and deprecated places at different times. Diverse opinions exist

today from the philosophical perspectives – from a belief that originality, seeded in the imagination, no longer proves fresh and may be constantly recycled; to a belief that it gives meaning to life and has potential for transforming the present through endless possibilities.

The brief overview of some of the work of the scientific world in attempting to describe the nature of the imagination demonstrates empirical aspects to this faculty. In particular the links between medicine and psychology in treating illness demonstrate the growing interest in the healing qualities attributed to the imaginative processes.

Jungian psychology has been the authority of choice in arguing the vital capacity of the imagination in accessing unconscious material. The archetypal sources of information may often be the foundation for diagnosing and treating emotional or mental dysfunction or disorders. Further exploration of the psychological aspects of imagery in spirituality will be explored in Chapter Two.

Theological exploration of the concept of imagination has shown it to be at the mercy of conflicting forces deeming it at one time an evil pulling the believer away from God to worship another power; and at other times a wonderful source of creativity and life, enabling the person to communicate with the Divine. The following chapter focuses on the discipline of spirituality; the nature of imagery; images; symbols and the imagination and argues their important role in some traditions within spirituality.

Chapter Two; Spirituality and Imagination

The following chapter seeks to further broaden the insights on the imagination. Since Spirituality is the foundational discipline for this dissertation, a brief overview of Christian Spirituality will be offered followed by specific engagement of Ignatian Spirituality. The imaginative processes are of particular interest in comprehending aspects of Ignatian Spirituality. Later in the chapter some current spirituality practices engaging the imagination will be outlined.

2.1 What is Christian Spirituality?

Contemporary Western culture is experiencing the paradox of the rejection of many traditional expressions of religion. Many people are disillusioned with their religion as expressed by the institution and yet they experience the desire to engage in the quest for the spiritual.

The explosion of material available in most bookshops today cover such topics as New Age, humanistic psychology, mysticism, ritual, meditation, Zen, Sufi, Occult, self-help handbooks, Celtic and medieval spiritualities: “Certain Christian figures, such as Julian of Norwich,

Hildegard of Bingen or Meister Eckhart have almost achieved cult status."(92)

In the New Dictionary of Theology spirituality is described thus:

> The term has no direct equivalent in scripture and did not emerge historically as a well-defined branch of theology until the 18th century when Giovanni Scaramelli (1687-1752) of the Society of Jesus established ascetical and mystical theology as a science of the spiritual life. (93)

Other scholars use the term "Spirituality" in a different sense, partly because the spiritual life is itself so complex: The study of Christian spirituality allows one's understanding and imagination to be lifted beyond the limits commonly placed upon the Holy Spirit by contemporary practice. (94) It is "a discipline rooted in experience, attentive to the issue of the self, nourished by history and concerned for social justice". (95)

Sandra Schneiders asserts that spirituality "is the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate values one perceives".(96) This definition could apply equally to spiritualities that are non-theistic.

Joann Wolski Conn however, is specifically Christian when she states that spirituality involves the human capacity of self-transcending knowledge, love and commitment:

> …as it is actualised through the experience of God in Jesus, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Because God's Spirit comes to us only through experience and symbols inseparable from human community and history, Christian spirituality includes every dimension of life. (97)

In his book on *Spirituality for the 21st Century*, Pat Collins looks at spirituality from four points of view: a) that it can be perceived as an experience of transcendence, b) this experience can be shared by large groups of people, c) it is a way of living and d) it can be an academic study, e.g. from scriptural, historical psychological, phenomenological and liturgical perspectives. (98)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to the variety of spiritualities that have developed within the Church down through the centuries. (99) Firstly there are the personal charisms of various founders of congregations which expressed a particular spirituality, e.g. that of St Ignatius of Loyola, St Francis of Assisi, St Vincent de Paul. Secondly, a specific spirituality can be associated with a particular

culture, e.g. Celtic Spirituality. Thirdly, spirituality can be associated with a movement of the Spirit in the Church, for example, the Beguines of the Middle Ages or the Charismatic and Feminist movements of the 20th century. Fourthly, spirituality can be associated with different churches, e.g. Orthodox, Evangelical. (100)

This work does not address the diverse definitions of spiritualities, which exist today, rather it focuses on the place of the imagination, images and symbols in spirituality using Ignatian Spirituality (within the overall discipline of spirituality), as the choice of supporting evidence. One of the distinctive emphases of the Ignatian way is its stress on the imagination as a means to and way of prayer. Ignatius noticed this natural faculty within each person, and he affirmed and encouraged his followers in the use of the imagination in prayer. (101) An outline of this particular way of living in the Spirit follows.

2.2 Imagination in the History of Spirituality

> "This is to smell the infinite fragrance and taste
> the infinite sweetness of the Divinity"
> (*Spiritual Exercises*, Exx. 124) (102)

Ignatius of Loyola was born into a noble family at the castle of Loyola in northern Spain. He pursued a military career, which came to an abrupt end upon receiving a severe wound to his right leg during the siege of Pamplona. During his convalescence he underwent profound religious conversion while reading two medieval works – Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ* and Jacopo da Voragine's lives of the saints entitled the *Golden Legend*. (103)

He subsequently spent a year of prayer and penance at Manresa (1522-'3). There he was encouraged by profound spiritual insights. During this time that he is alleged to have written the substance for the now well known *Spiritual Exercises* (104) recording objectively his own spiritual journey for the benefit of others. The *Spiritual Exercises* were intended as a manual for the person guiding others through the program it outlines. Later after studying theology and founding the Society of Jesus, the *Exercises* received papal approval in 1548.

Ignatius learned the practice of imagining from the *Life of Christ*, where Ludolph (a 14th century Carthusian), recommended the reader to look at the events of the life of Christ as if they were actually taking place. In the *Spiritual Exercises,* Ignatius went on to develop a form of imaginative contemplation which was derived from the study of these medieval monastic traditions. He encouraged the person to engage the imagination in order to arouse the affections, especially through key

meditations such as the meditation on the "Two Standards". As O'Malley says of Ignatius: "he constructed a course in which generations have found themselves prepared to respond in a new way to an inner call for intimacy with the divine."

In an article entitled "Jesus in the Heart's Imagination", Robert Egan describes how Ignatius instructed retreatants to use their imaginations:

> to picture various things happening and to picture themselves in various situations. In one exercise…(Ignatius) invites us to picture ourselves on our deathbed, reviewing the course of our choices in life; in another exercise, he invites us to look down from heaven to earth with the Holy Trinity seeing humankind in all its struggle and longing. (105)

In his exploration of Ignatius and contemplation, David Lonsdale describes Ignatius as having little gift for abstract thought in prayer:

> His mind worked far more easily with the concrete, with stories, pictures and images…God is most clearly mediated to us through easily recognised religious images...Ignatian contemplation extend(s) the range of images in which God is to be found so as to recognise and contemplate God "in all things". (106)

In citing Exercises 111-117 of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Lonsdale goes on to explain how while exploring a story with the mind, we tend to respond to it with our feelings, then "…interact with the imagination, reflect on them in solitude and calm and allow these varied activities to influence our choices and commitments." This kind of contemplation gives a special place to the imagination – different levels of "feeling and commitment… can be touched and moved through (the power of) the imagination."

Ignatius' main concern was that a person be drawn to God in love through the imagination. (Imaginative contemplation of the Gospels moves the heart to respond in truth out of its fullness or its emptiness. This response is by a conversation that Ignatius called a colloquy.

Lonsdale goes on to assert that God is most clearly mediated to us through easily recognised religious images such as biblical stories and writings, accepted religious symbols and rituals, and people whose lives obviously speak to us of God.

A current Jesuit Resource Web-site describes clearly the spirituality that Ignatius was prescribing: The spiritual exercises are a way to go

through a prayer experience to discover, through praying and scripture and the Church's revelation, what your own deepest and most authentic desiring is and to find the courage to enact that. (107)

The use of the imagination in prayer is not without its critics. There are those who argue against its use in prayer. These critics reject what appears to them as an artificial and contrived approach to God. Others argue the reverse saying that it encourages an over-emotional sentimentality.

There may be inherent dangers in the desire to control what one wants to imagine or how one images God, as this method may avoid issues that God wishes them to face. Another question raised is that the cultivation of the emotions may get in the way of a deeper encounter with God. In the second method of prayer given in the fourth week of the *Spiritual Exercises* some of these dangers are addressed by Ignatius' advice that one should stop as soon as one found "fruit", the fruit being an insight into the spiritual life or a savouring of the love of God.

Other sources of difficulty can include the temperament of the person praying. For whatever reason the person may not readily "conjure up pictures" into which they can enter. It may become a frustrating tedious exercise. In a retreat context it may become a stumbling block with the person in frustration declaring "I have no imagination". Ignatian scholars have pointed out that the contemplation which Ignatius calls "application of the senses" is not about passing a test in observation after having somehow dragged up from the imagination what one has observed, rather, "what is hoped for is an entering into the deepest meaning of the…prayer, and a leaving behind of thoughts and words in order to be still in simple desire."(108) Another aspect in imaginative prayer to be avoided, is where the imaging and meditation becomes an end in itself, or a programme to be followed through. (109)

Egan, in the previously cited article "Jesus in the Heart's Imagination", recognises the difficulties inherent in use of the imagination for some people and recommends that the "primary imagination of an individual or of a people, may require criticism, therapy, repentance, revitalisation."(110)

These difficulties are crucial in the area of pastoral awareness. The pastoral minister must be discerning in the forms of guided prayer or group prayer offered in diverse contexts. Also the fact that the imagination can present several different images for various realities, each with its own set of feelings and behaviours, calls for the gift of wisdom and discernment on the part of the spiritual guide and the person at prayer.

The following section outlines this aspect of guiding a person spiritually, namely spiritual direction based on Ignatian spirituality. Other

spiritual practices engaging the imagination and affect follow.

2.3 Spirituality Practices

In this final section three key areas of spiritual practice in which the imagination is creatively engaged today are identified. The choice is eclectic and personal.

Spiritual Direction:

Spiritual direction is a ministry within the Church, which is centred on guiding individuals in developing and cultivating their personal relationship with God. It is a ministry of listening and seeing, of presence and revelation. In the book *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, both Jesuit authors, William Barry and William Connolly, say that the only prerequisite for engaging in spiritual direction is that the person in direction (directee) have affective experiences of God which he/she notices and can bring to the direction session for discernment and guidance:

> Whether these experiences come through centring prayer, the rosary, Ignatian contemplation, dreams, Zen meditation…matters little. When a person has such experience he has the "foodstuff" for spiritual direction… no matter what its source. (111)

Once a person has begun to listen to God in his/her life and is attracted to exploring the effect this relationship is having on their life, they may want ongoing help in reflecting on the continuing dialogue and relationship, i.e. through the ministry of spiritual direction. In terms of decision-making as a result of the direction process the person (directee), retains personal responsibility for those decisions. Therefore, while discernment involves both director and directee, the latter is free to follow the path they believe is God's call for them.

A link between psychology and spirituality is clearly expressed in the process of Active Imagination. In the school of psychology, Carl Jung promoted the concept of Active Imagination to help his patients (see Psychology Perspectives, 1.3). He described this tool of visualisation as facilitating what is unconscious to come to consciousness. It is often used in contemporary spiritual direction.

Active imagination is a process or tool in which a bridge is established between one's conscious and unconscious self through the use of imagery. Carl Jung, who believed that if someone wants to make progress in the inner life then Active Imagination is the route to go, promoted the process. (112)

In his article on the imagination, Martin Dean explains that active imagination becomes effective when:

> The directee can accept…all that is truly present in his or her immediate personal experience – both the blockages and the yearnings…facilitated active imagination can enable a transformative process in which the directee moves from reporting or reflecting on God's work toward being present to God at work at that very moment. (113)

Dean goes on to explore a session in which he was the directee. Through the process of Active Imagination he was enabled to firstly recognise feelings of anger, sadness and tension prompted by an incident with a colleague. At the director's invitation he then was guided to allow an image to emerge that would capture these feelings. The image was one of a daffodil growing in the snow. It did not make sense to him at the time and yet through dialogue with the image he noted the tension and anger receding, while his mind tried to make connections.

Later, while reflecting on the experience, Dean recognised that talking about the conflict would not have yielded the same depth of understanding as the use of Active Imagination. This is the same process promoted by Carl Jung. The imagination is termed active because the ego chooses to enter the inner world – the image becomes the doorway and the vehicle. The relationship between the ego and the unconscious is altered, setting a path towards wholeness. (114)

Using imagery to make dim awareness more conscious can address a split within a person's experience. In quoting Robert Johnson, (115) Dean claims that an image can trigger a memory, and something specific and real can be healed deep inside in response to a symbolic interaction.

In the direction process, Active imagination is effective when a directee can accept without censoring or repressing all that is truly present in his/her immediate personal experience, both the blockages and yearnings.

For those who enter into the spiritual direction relationship there is the potential for discerning and experiencing a deeply satisfying experience of God at work in their lives. The links between the imagination, the emotions, depth awareness and opportunities to make life-giving decisions, is one means of opening a channel for God's grace to work.

There are other related spiritual practices, which may be used in the spiritual direction context. Space does not permit further exploration in this work. (116)

2.3.2 Clay Work.

The use of clay in contemporary personal development and spirituality workshops has become increasingly popular. In some of these contexts the participants are invited to take a piece of clay in its raw state. With guided imagery they are led to mould the piece of clay into some form emerging from their unconscious, based on the meditation or imagery. Engaging with the piece of clay may trigger a realisation that one is holding a piece of the created earth. There is the potential for the "potter" at work to feel "earthed", i.e. in touch with one of the elements. The experience of moulding the clay is full of symbolism – some resembling the scripture reference to Jeremiah going down to the potter's house (Jeremiah 18: 1-6). Here, God says to Jeremiah that in the way the clay is in the potter's hand so is Jeremiah in God's hand. This may express the intimacy of the relationship between God and the person praying the scripture text.

Over time the potter may notice the heat being transferred from his/her hands to the clay, like giving life to the inanimate piece. So too, noticing the unbidden image emerging from the clay piece, now moulded by the potter's hands and fingerprints, may invite reflection and engagement with the emotional level.

Later sharing on the experience and on the new "creation" often yields a wealth of emotion and surprising insights can be experienced. The symbolism of the piece of moulded clay is personal to the individual and can be a precious reminder of that inner experience.

In his retreat work handbook entitled "The Body in Prayer", Donagh O'Shea, a Dominican priest, has rediscovered the preaching of his founder, St Dominic. He says: "His prayer came from the whole self; and his preaching had the same stamp…it abounded in stories, metaphors and other "bodily ideas"."(117) As a result of O'Shea's reflections, the retreats have "evolved as methods of full-bodied prayer and palpable ways of seeking God."(118) One of these bodily expressions is through clay work.

He goes on to describe that there comes a moment when the "potter" gains a new insight or awareness. A new vitality is present because "something in the person has risen from the dead". (119)

O' Shea goes on to say: "I am awe-struck at the power of living symbolism. I have no doubt that we live by symbols. Unlike abstract ideas they have roots that draw power from every level of the self, and so they bring these levels to life". (120)

In contrasting the often conflictual group dynamics that occur if one puts twelve people in a room together he declares:

> Put a bag of clay in the room with them and the transforma-

> tion is profound: they become a community and attain a degree of freedom with one another that no amount of talking could have brought about. (121)

This gives some insight into the power of the unconscious at work while engaged in symbolic work (see: Symbols in Prayer 2.3.3).

One example of a participant's experience of clay work during a workshop entitled "God and Me", in the context of a meditation, may further clarify the use of clay in the faith journey. The piece that emerged was described as that of a small girl kneeling, with her head on God's shoulder, enfolded in a cloak emerging from the shoulders of God. The experience described was that of longing to see and touch God, and yet feeling very far removed from His gaze. In the piece, the participant was amazed to reflect that she is very much in God's presence yet with her head on His shoulder she cannot see Him. His cloak is lovingly and protectively all around her, yet not touching her. The participant later was able to recognise the effect of working with the clay while at prayer. She was opened up to a new awareness of God's love for her and as a result, could contemplate new possibilities for relating more deeply with her Creator.

Symbols in prayer

> What we have not named
> Or beheld as a symbol
> Escapes our notice (122)

A symbol is any reality, which by its inherent dynamism or power leads to another deeper reality through a sharing in the dynamism that the symbol itself offers. They relate primarily to the hearts of people, to their imagination. This does not mean that the role of the rational, conceptual knowledge is denied. Rather, "the real key that unlocks the door to reveal the power of symbols is the imagination". (123)

Symbols function on three levels: the meaning, the emotive and the directive levels. The "meaning" aspect allows the symbol to make a statement; the "emotive" aspect is engaged because feelings arise as a response to the statement; thirdly, the symbol directs the person to act in a particular way as a result of its meaning and its emotional impact. (124)

In relation to religion, Andrew Greeley suggests that a religion is as good as its symbols:

> The force of a religion in supporting social values rests then on the ability of its symbols to formulate a world view in

> which those values, as well as the forces opposing their realisation, are fundamental ingredients…

And also:

> Man is a symbolising, conceptualising, meaning-seeking animal and religion is the attempt to symbolise the ultimate reality. A religion will be effective precisely to the extent that its symbols are effective. (125)

Two examples of symbols as a means to engaging the spiritual dimension in the person will be explored here – the icon and the mandala.

Icon is a Greek word for image. For centuries they have been venerated as symbols of the Divine. In the Orthodox Churches they receive the same reverence given to scripture. In times past the icons were the scripture for those who could not read – such was their power of communication. Icons are art and prayer combined – in this they differ from other religious pictures/images. On large church walls they have been designed in mosaics and frescoes. Each colour, gesture, facial expression, and symbol within the icon have significant universal meaning. For example the gold leaf backgrounds symbolises divine light coming through and surrounding the key figures. The goitre-like neck feature on the figures symbolises divine wisdom.

Icons have a powerful role in teaching. Their symbolic language brings theology into visual expression, however primarily icons "speak to the heart through intuition, making a direct communication into the viewer who allows this relationship. Thus icons are a catalyst of mystical communion between believer and the Divine." (126).

Today, in Ireland 2001, there are courses offered on iconography. In accordance with ecclesiastical requirements the iconographer must adhere to a special discipline including prayer before, during and after the creation of the icon. The materials are blessed before use. (127) It is thus born of prayer and as such may symbolise a part of the faith journey of the artist.

Another symbolic art form is the mandala already explored in the psychology section in Chapter One. Generally associated with eastern philosophy, the mandala is formed by a circular arrangement of elements. It is usually two-dimensional but can be three-dimensional. It is a device for remembering symbols in relation to each other, according to some pre-arranged structure. Any circular pattern can be a mandala. Examples include rose windows, Tibetan sand mandalas, Tantric Yoga mandalas or South American sun calendars and naturally occurring snowflakes. The mandala is also a meditative device. A Mandala meditation can be a kind of self-exploration. In general, the art, symbols, and

colour of a Mandala will guide an individual from the distractions of the mind, from the outer rim of the Mandala to a still centre, the centre of the Mandala.

Again in the Christian context these art forms are used for personal development, therapy and as a means to prayer. One group in south inner-city Dublin has been using this means of self-exploration and prayer for some years. The participants praise highly the depth experience gained using this kind of art.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has set some current spirituality practices in the context of Ignatian Spirituality, which emphasises accessing the imagination in religious experience. This spirituality of St Ignatius is only one of many kinds of Christian Spirituality evident among world religions. The three practices described above, spiritual direction, clay work and symbols have a richness within themselves, already referred to. Yet there are many more means of using art forms for prayer and faith development. Space does not allow for exploring these, however they include art appreciation, painting, pastels, music, dance, flower art, wood carving and metalwork.

Chapter Three – A Case Study

Having established an understanding of the imagination from a multidisciplinary perspective in Chapter One, and having outlined the place of imaginative processes in Ignatian Spirituality (Chapter Two), an analysis of the imagination in contemporary spiritual experience will be the next focus.

This chapter explores recent research designed to examine the significance of the imaginative processes to contemporary Christian spirituality as experienced by a group of six people. The research is gathered from six spiritual animators who have facilitated groups using artwork/imagery in varying contexts. Ultimately the intention is to discover both the implications of, and to propose appropriate recommendations for, pastoral caregivers who wish to engage the imagination in the field of spirituality ministry. An outline of the methodology used will be followed by a summary of the data, with analysis and interpretation of the main themes emerging.

Study Protocol:

This section maps the study protocol, outlines the methodology used, profiles the interviewees (participants) and describes the focus and context for the interview and the rationale for the particular question

format used.

Methodology: Why use Focus Group Interviewing (FGI)?
The Focus Group Interviewing technique is a tool for studying ideas in a group context. The use of this kind of research can be traced back to Lazarsfeld's Marianthal Studies in the 1940's. (128) In the focused interview the main function of the interviewer is to focus attention on a given experience and its effects.

FGI can be used in a wide variety of situations and for many reasons – sometimes in conjunction with other forms of research for example following a questionnaire. FGI combines other research tools, i.e. elements of individual interviews and participant observation within a group setting. In this situation it was used as a case study tool to generate reflections based on the participants' experiences in the arena of using the imaginative processes within the work of spirituality.

A Focus Group Interview is a carefully planned discussion, based on pre-set questions, designed to elicit the perceptions, insights and attitudes of the participants in a defined area of interest. FGI investigates why the participants think as they do on the relevant topic. To encourage this, the environment created needs to be relaxed, comfortable and non-threatening. Significantly, group members often influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion.

Although the participants are free to express completely their own line of thought, the direction of the interview is clearly in the hands of the interviewer. (129)

The basic data that focus groups produce are verbatim transcripts of the group discussions. (130) This format facilitates analysis of the text in a more accessible fashion i.e. the researcher must organise the data, analyse the significant patterns and themes, and interpret them in the light of relevant literature that has been studied.

3.1.2 Profile of participants and criteria:
The participants were contacted personally and given an outline of the research. Out of a possible nine candidates, six agreed to participate. The interview was taped, with permission from the participants, using audio tape recording and a dictaphone to ensure clarity for later transcription. In order to generate greater freedom of response anonymity was guaranteed. The names and any details linking the participants to a particular context have been changed in the transcript to maintain confidentiality. The criteria for FGI were followed. (131)

The research in question is a case study conducted on 21st May 2001 in Dublin City. Six people participated as well as the researcher. Contact

was made through All Hallows College contacts and from this researcher's ministerial experience. The interview lasted for one hour. In order to have a variety of experiences, the research was carried out on a mixed gender group, three men and three women, age 20-40 years. There were two lay people, two religious and two clerical participants. Each person stated they were practising Roman Catholics.

The criterion for contacting each participant was that he/she be familiar with working with images and symbols personally and/or have been involved in leading groups in using various forms of imagery and symbolism in spirituality contexts. Five of the six had led groups. All had used different art forms personally, for human development, spirituality and prayer.

For reference purposes each of the participants was assigned a code according to gender using (M) for male and (F) for female. They will be numbered according to their alphabetical placing, i.e. M1 = Greg, F3 = Sinead etc.

The following were the backgrounds of the six participants (codes in brackets):

(a) Greg – an Irish curate ministering in a city parish, aged 40's. He has an appreciation for impressionist paintings, uses artwork for homilies and plays liturgical music to convey a Gospel message. (M1)

(b) Maureen – an Irish religious sister, who is involved in retreat work, aged late 40's. During her retreat work she has used clay, art, colour, flower arranging and scripture texts with groups. (F1)

(c) Jim – an Irishman, a welder by trade and currently studying theology, aged late 30's. In the course of his theology studies he recognised the possibilities of combing his steelwork with spirituality. He has made a number of liturgical art pieces. (M2)

(d) Nora – a Northern Irish religious sister, teaches dance and music, age late 30's. She has five years experience of working with a variety of groups in the contexts of retreats, workshops and seminars. (F2)

(e) Michael – a deacon from Sardinia currently involved in Pastoral studies and ministering to youth in the city, aged late 20's. His growing appreciation for icons has opened up new insights into the contexts of scripture, spirituality and art forms. (M3)

(f) Sinead – a primary school teacher from England, aged mid 40's. She has fifteen years experience of teaching children and preparing them for the sacraments of Penance and First communion. Personally, she has engaged in retreats, workshops and creative weekends both as a participant and as a leader.(F3)

The Disadvantages and limitations of this approach
This researcher recognises the limitations posed by focus group interviewing, e.g. one group alone was researched; the participants had no uniform identity; the environment created was artificial in that the participants were relative strangers to one another and this may have contributed to some participants' lack of freedom to partake. A disadvantage of interviews is that they may tend towards being a forcing technique, i.e. producing answers, which respond to the interviewer's questions. Another factor to be considered is that two of the participants had later appointments to attend after the interview – this placed a degree of time-constraint on those individuals and may have adversely affected their concentration. The research findings do not claim to define all aspects of the vast experience of leaders who engage the imagination when working with groups in spirituality contexts.

3.1.3 The Focus and Context
The pastoral focus of this interview was twofold. Firstly, it was concerned with evaluating the effects that imaginative processes may have on the person's spirituality and how this may relate to Ignatian Spirituality; and secondly, it sought to establish the appropriateness of using artwork within groups for the purpose of creating deeper awareness of the individual group members' personal spirituality.

The questions were formulated in the light of the literature outlined in Chapter's One and Two and from determining the pastoral focus. Six questions were posed specifically to explore:

a) the effectiveness of accessing the imaginative processes using symbols and imagery,
b) the relationship between the participants' use of images and their spirituality,
c) The implications for using the imaginative processes in developing depth spirituality with other people.

Defining what the researcher meant by "artwork" prefaced the interview Artwork, in this context, means any kind of imagery or symbolism, any kind of work you have done in this form, either personally or in a group context.

This was clarified in order not to limit the imagery or symbolism explored to one form, e.g. paintings. Therefore the participants during the interview, used "Artwork", "imagery", "images" and "symbols" synonymously and interchangeably.

3.1.4. Rationale for the questions:
Following introductions to the interview, the participants were guided to reflect on the following questions:

1 *What did you enjoy most about the artwork you have done?*
This question was designed to be a gentle non-threatening opener that would also help determine the effects of working creatively with art forms. It was hoped that the energy created by the question would point towards the life-giving aspects of artwork.
2 *Is there anything that you didn't enjoy about working creatively or with artwork?*
This question followed naturally on the previous one with the intention of later using the data for recommendations (Chapter Four) in using artwork with other people, i.e. ways to enhance the experience both for individuals and for a group.
3 *Has this artwork and reflection on it changed the way that you look at life?*
This broad question deliberately precedes the God question. It was designed to provide an opportunity for the participants to express general elements of their "inner world" or attitudes to life's experiences, evoked through using images/artwork.
4 *Has artwork helped your understanding of God?*
It was hoped that this question, the pivotal question, would investigate how engagement of imaginative processes through current spirituality practices, may impact on a person's sense of relationship with God.
5 *What has surprised you most when you use this medium of expression with others?*
The surprise element can point towards noticing the dynamics involved when working with a group creatively. The hope here was that the advantages and merits of using these kinds of media, for the purpose of awakening the spirituality of the individuals involved in the group might emerge definitively.
6 *If you were asked to suggest artwork for others what would it be?*
Finally this question was intended to link with implications and recommendations to be made by the researcher in relation to the relevance of using creative media in spirituality contexts. This question, coupled with question two, forms the essence of the work in Chapter Four.

3.2. Summary of Research Data:

3.2.1 What did you enjoy most about the artwork you have done?
This question was responded to on two levels, personal experience and that of working with a group. On a personal level, the participants described enjoying experiences of deep inner self-discovery because of

engaging with artwork. This awareness yielded new insights about themselves and a sense of growing in inner freedom.

Other enjoyable experiences described were those of discovering new gifts associated with experimenting with different art forms and creative media: "…discover a gift…"(F3), "...this year I used a lot of oil pastels…"(F2), "…I have started to use…paintings and imagery as a tool…"(M1). This appeared to lead to new forms of self-expression, where the image had the potential to reflect one's feelings and attitudes: "…using the mediums of paint, crayons and colour, particularly in expressing myself in ways…"(F3), "…it gets people beyond their logical thinking and gets me beyond it as well…"(F2).

The experience of being immersed in a piece of artwork was reported as very satisfying and could lend itself to feeling "at one" with the artwork itself for example one participant described his experience thus: "…(What) I enjoyed most was…I became nearly the artwork…I didn't know whether I was looking at it or it was looking at me…" (M2).

Is there anything that you didn't enjoy about working creatively or with artwork?

The main aspect of artwork that was not enjoyable was performance anxiety – both at not being able to use the materials to construct a mental image and also the pressure of deadlines to produce a piece of work: "…having an image in your mind of being afraid that you couldn't actually construct (the) way that you see it, there's an anxiety..." and "…I didn't enjoy…having to meet a deadline…"(M2). Anxiety also existed due to an initial lack of trust in the process of using different media: "…anxiety around whether I will be able to do this…have I got what it takes?" (F3).

The experience of feeling coerced into doing specific artwork and not having an option about it was cited as not being enjoyable: "…I don't enjoy…being forced to do it…not having the choice." (M3).

On another level, two of the participants described resistance experienced to doing artwork on some occasions. This was because of the fear of being led into the experience of painful emotions and fearing feeling unprotected: "…using artwork…can leave me feeling quite exposed…emotion rises within…I had to say, whoa! This is too much…(M1), "…there's a frustration there or there is a block in me…there's a resistance around not enjoying it; there's something coming that I don't …want to deal with…"(F2). The initial resistance and awareness of "blocks" to the emotion was described as a frustrating feeling (F2).

Has artwork, and reflection on it, changed the way that you look at life? A common thread through responses to this question was that by eventually overcoming resistance to artwork, there was a new found freedom and a new access to self-discovery and self-awareness: "…I realised there was a whole freedom in me to use colour. It had taken the block away…" (F1), "…the kind of art that helps you to go and look deeper…" (M1). A sense of being "woken up" was described: "…my whole life changed…art…dance, music…were all media that actually put me in touch with a side of myself that I couldn't ignore…" (F2). This new level of inner-depth had implications for the participants' relationships with self, others and God: "…it opened a whole new avenue of ways of expression, of ways of praying or ways of looking at life…" (F3), "…I am inclined to…look for deeper meanings, not just in a situation but in relation to people and how I relate to them as well" (M1).

Two participants described the new ease of communicating symbolically, i.e. comprehension appears easier for them because of using visual imagery: "…I speak to them in a symbolic language…the person can understand an awful lot quicker…" (M2), "…people…have a visual representation of…a point I am trying to make…people responded very positively to using a visual image…" (M1).

In attending symbolically to their inner darkness and pain a new perspective on life and its problems was outlined: "…you can't look at life once you've experienced that pain I feel…that or the darkness, and go through it, everything changes, your whole perspective in life…" (F2). The dynamic of facing the darkness and pain of emotion, through the use of art forms, seemed to free the participant's sense of self.

Sometimes they identified how the response of silence before an image had a healing effect: "…things will surface when there have been no words and you have allowed yourself just to be in touch…" (F2), "…things can come up when you allow yourself to be quiet and be still, which artwork can help you to do." "…when somebody puts it (artwork) in front of them the silence speaks more than the words…(F2).

One participant described how his prayer life changed through studying icons and realising how he came to believe the reverence due to icons was equal to reverence to scripture: "…something that really changed was my prayer life…it changed all my sense of prayer…" (M3). Jim described looking at the symbolism of nature and seeing the world as God sees it: "…it would also help me get in touch with nature…" (M2). This linked into the next question.

3.2.4 Has artwork helped your understanding of God?
Art was described as having the power to reflect the participants' image of God. However, what was more likely was that it could challenge, develop and change the participants' image and understanding of God. "It really helped me to look at my image of God…" (F1), "…the artwork…symbolises so much of life that is going on around you…" (M2) "…my image of God changed so much…the images open me very much to…God (M3). Images point to the God that is infinite, is more than the symbol created and yet the symbol creates an opportunity for one's image of God to evolve: "…when I think I've got God, He's elsewhere…"(F1), "…I let myself be open to the Spirit…" (M3). One participant summed up her experience of artwork as: "…anything I create is part of God, expresses God, is God, …I am God's vessel for creation; it's like continuing God's work…"(F2).

Reflecting on natural symbols like the cycle of life and death in nature was for one participant a spiritual experience because they pointed to a greater Being who created them. One can experience new energy because of this: "…it brings you in touch with nature…with the natural cycle of life and the growth and decay, the Spring and the Winter…it's a spiritual experience." (M2).

A clash of symbols and images was portrayed as challenging one participant to "hold in tension": 1) the images of God that the institutional Church appears to portray and 2) the images she recognises as aspects of God: "…art…and creative work…threw me into an awful problem with the institutional church, and now I find myself trying to hold the tension between the two…" (F2). The challenge experienced was about acknowledging "the more" that God truly is "…God is beyond words…" (F2).

Greg made a theological distinction between understanding God, and appreciating God: "…the person's ability to comprehend is limited by their ability to…articulate their thoughts…understanding God seems to be about the intellect…" (M1). Artwork can illuminate truths being contemplated and can point to God as "more than", as greater. Hence one can appreciate aspects of God: "…I don't know if artwork helps the intellectual understanding of God…what it does for me is to …expand the whole appreciation of who God is…" (M1).

What has surprised you most when you use this medium of expression with others?
The surprise elements described ranged widely. Some participants noticed the range of subjects expressed through art: "…the variety of what people express…" (F3); "…people starting to show what is going

on for them and what they are struggling with…" (F2); "…everyone was able to pray – even people who never said a prayer…" (M3); "…people were able to connect with there own pain through looking at what I had created." (M2); "…how accessible it (artwork) seems to be for people…" (M1).

Other participants expressed their surprise by reporting the manner of expressions through imagery: "…the ways they express it…' (F3); "What surprised me…is the whole…energy shift that can happen in a group…" (F2); "…art gives this faculty that you cannot hide what is happening (inside)…" (M3); "…the whole development of creativity for adults…or renewing it in people…it took them back to their childhood…" (F1); "…people can't put words on (something) until they see something that would trigger it." (M2); "…what surprises me is how evocative it is…" (M1).

The depth of emotions felt because of engaging with artwork was another surprising element in artwork. Emotions described by the participants when leading a group were of delight and of the sense of privilege at being the facilitator of the experience for others: "…watching how something new was born in them…it was quite an experience for me to be part of…" (F3); "…I was amazed, they were amazed…I'm the person that is privileged here…" (F2); "…watching them being surprised as well…(and) the delight that other people can get out of it…" (F3).

Nora reported a change of energy level often experienced in a group situation because of using art forms. These shifts in energy level may occur because of movement along a continuum: from superficial sharing to deeper sharing, to growing trust and a lessening of fear of being judged by group members: "There is this massive shift through creative work and working with groups from this more…superficial level to deeper stuff…not feeling they are going to be judged by it…" (F2).

Even seemingly unlikely groups appeared to be able to benefit from using some form of creative work – "German volunteers" (F2); "…group of old people all over seventy…" (M3); a particular "adult group" (F1); "a group of travelling women" (F3); people who are "suffering from depression" (M2).

Another interesting feature described by Greg was the communal dimension in a group's understanding of similar messages being conveyed. Artwork can evoke mutuality in a group, as well as triggering individual responses: "…art and imagery is…(so) accessible for people…there is a communal element…what the image is trying to convey is common to all" (M1).

If you were asked to suggest artwork for others what would it be?
The responses to this question centred on recommending types of artwork and on reasons for advising specific creative media. The range of creative artwork recommended included dance, art appreciation, clay, photos, icons, drumming, flower-arranging, ikebana, paint, crayons, pastels, images, paintings and painting by hand.

It was generally agreed that these participants could not limit people to art forms but must offer them the opportunity to try different forms and make their own choice: "…very hard to limit somebody...diversity is major…" (F2): "I would suggest using what I am comfortable with…" (F1); "…it is more to help people to taste the beauty of these things…" (M3). The purpose of any artwork was to give space for the person to reflect and focus on whatever issue/subject they desired "…in respecting (diversity) I am trying to give people space…" (F2). Some of the art forms, e.g. dance, crayons, paints have the ability to put a person in touch with their own playfulness – a rare opportunity for many adults: "…it really gets you in touch with a side of you that normally doesn't get out to play very often" (F2).

3.3 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data
The transcript of the Focus Group Interview was analysed in the light of the pastoral focus of this dissertation, i.e. the implications for using the imaginative processes in developing depth spirituality with other people. This included consideration of the effects that imaginative processes may have on the person's spirituality and discerning the appropriateness of using artwork within groups for the purpose of creating deeper awareness of the individual group members' personal relationship with God.

The significant emerging themes were:
- The place of artwork in accessing the "Inner World".
- The impact of artwork/imagery on one's relationship with God.
- The experience of using art/images in a group context – material from this third theme will be used in Chapter Four in relation to the a) implications of and b) recommendations for, using the imaginative processes in the context of spirituality in group situations.

3.3.1 The effects of artwork and reflection on accessing the Inner World.
Analysing the data under this theme highlighted significant references to various emotions: anxiety, fear, resistance, "blocks", enjoyment, wonder and peace. The words "enjoy", "enjoyable", etc. were alluded to eight times; "energy" was referred to seven times, and anxiety, four times. In each reference to a specific emotion the context was that of being

immersed in artwork, i.e. a consequence of involvement with artwork.

One of the effects of imaginative work may be the "removal of blocks" to the emotions or perceptive processes; this dynamic was described as deepening one's perspective on life issues (F2, M3). It is significant that the terms "deep" or "deeper" were used nine times. These were in the context of referring to inner movement from superficial to more profound levels of awareness. The issues focussed on during these occasions included personal problems: "…I'm a lot easier with myself than I used to be" (M2); relationships with others, God and self (F1, F2, and M2). Participants related experiencing a sense of "waking up" (F2), or having "a wider vision" (F3), and being enabled to go deeper into the mystery of the self. Problems were perceived in a new light and alternative solutions sometimes found; this was because of spending quality time meditating on the issue symbolically. It was noted that new perspectives may emerge in the quiet and stillness: "…things will surface when there have been no words and you have allowed yourself just to be in touch…" (F2), "…things can come up when you allow yourself to be quiet and be still, which artwork can help you to do", "…when somebody puts it (artwork) in front of them the silence speaks more than the words…(F2).

Each of the six participants acknowledged that there are profound life-giving dimensions to using artwork creatively. Because of enjoying these experiences, new life and energy is released (see summary to question one above). Also, Jim described the new energy experienced while creating the symbol/image. He went on to outline one such experience: that of "becoming the art", like being unable to "separate the dancers from the dance" (M2).

Creative artwork was agreed upon as being a very enjoyable experience. The most life-giving aspects included: discovering something new and refreshing within the self (F3); moving from the rational to the emotional level (F2, M1); "inner peace…harmony…" (F1); being "lost in the artwork" and the sense of "awe and wonder" (F2). This imaginative work was described by four participants as enabling the engagement of new talents and gifts previously hidden from the person and associated with experimenting with different art forms and creative media: "…discover a gift…"(F3), "...this year I used a lot of oil pastels…"(F2), "…I have started to use…paintings and imagery as a tool…"(M1).

3.3.1. When these comments are reflected on with respect to the previous chapters, the following issues emerge:

On a number of occasions during the interview the concept of the unconscious was alluded to. The experience of each participant, while

describing their involvement with artwork, contained references to unconscious material emerging regardless of their initial intended reflections or desires. Some examples include:

- "…(feeling) a resistance around…the emotions that come…it's always deeper stuff that comes through artwork…the artwork is going to take me somewhere I don't want to go…"(F2).
- "…discovering an image coming out of it (artwork) that was not intended…" "…whatever comes out is totally spontaneous…"(F2).
- "I painted a whole picture in black and afterwards I realised there was a whole freedom in me to use colour. It had taken a block away…that is…getting rid of the blocks."(F1).
- "Things will surface when there have been no words…"(F2).
- "Things come up when you allow yourself to be quiet and still…"(F3).
- "…The silence speaks more than the words…"(F2, M2).
- "…there is this massive shift through creative work and working with groups from….superficial level to deeper stuff…"(F2).
- "I think art gives this faculty that you cannot hide what is happening…we cannot hide what's inside…"(M3).
- "…I found myself getting very emotional…and I had to say whoa,…this is too much. I'm exposing myself too much…"(M1).
- "People were able to connect with their own pain through looking at what I had created…" "They can't really put words on it until they see something that …trigger(s) it…"(M2).
- "…The whole awareness that life has so many nuances to it…so many layers to it."(M1).
- "…Once you've experienced the pain…or the darkness and go through it, everything changes, your whole perspective on life…"(F2).

These insights express core aspects of Jungian psychology where healing is encouraged by providing an environment where the unconscious is allowed to speak to the conscious by means of images which the unconscious then "…projects onto the screen of the conscious mind". (132) In Chapter One aspects of the insights of Jung in relation to the unconscious processes have been explored.

Active imagination as described by Jung provides a way to concentrate one's attention on some spontaneous visual impressions or images. This process was evident in a number of the participants' descriptions of being immersed in the artwork. There are also parallels between his belief in the imaginative processes as a means to accessing emotions and memories and the perceptions that emerged in the interview above.

One of the participants referred to the trigger effect of a piece of his

creative work on another person. In it this person recognised the possibility that her husband had depression: "… 'My husband must be depressed'…she had never realised it till then." (M2). This would suggest a link with Jung's thesis that unconscious material may emerge in response to images. The artwork in this situation appears to have provided a context and an environment of safety for her to be able to disclose one of her previously unvoiced fears: "…people connect with their own pain through looking at what I had created…" (M2).

The nature of the material referred to by the participants would require further detailed research to explore the archetypal references and inferences of transpersonal psychology within the art forms created. This is not the subject matter for this thesis, but has interesting possibilities for further work.

3.3.2 The impact of artwork/imagery on one's relationship with God.
Analysis of the data under the concept of the person and God revealed the theme of the relevance of artwork to one's relationship to God. A number of sub-themes emerged including:

- Images of God.
- Aspects of theology – understanding of God.
- References to ways of praying.
- Institutional Church.
- Scripture references.

In facilitating the experience of God in prayer through the employment of imagery, it was acknowledged as a positive life-giving encounter within the spirituality of the six participants. Five participants, described the opportunity to pray as a result of retreat or other spiritual experiences, which engaged different art forms: One participant described how his prayer life changed through studying icons: "…something that really changed was my prayer life…it changed all my sense of prayer…" (M3). Another man described looking at the symbolism of nature and seeing the world as God sees it: "…it would also help me get in touch with nature…" (M2); "…it was a way of expressing myself …in my own retreat times…" (F3); "I remember being in a retreat…doing some art and working on myself…" (F1); "…a creative retreat…woke me up at a level…my relationship with God is beyond words…" (F2).

Another person described the experience of artwork as having a spiritual dimension. He used a poetic image to echo the sense of being so absorbed in the experience of contemplating the image that it would be impossible to"…(separate) the dancers from the dance…" i.e. his appreciation of self immersed in God (M2).

Three people recounted the power of imagery and symbols in changing their prayer life – one with icons (M3), one with clay work (F3), another with a variety of artwork (F2). They described being significantly moved to deeper levels of relationship with God: "…silence speaks more than the words…and that's the word, that's God." (F2); "…it was a big conversion for me to change from the logical to the images and it opens me very much to a God who can work through everything in my life…" (M3); "…different ways of expressing who God is for me…" (F3).

In the context of natural symbols, nature was cited as pointing towards the divine in ever-new ways. One of the men described it as having the capacity to raise the mind and heart to realising that "…a greater Being has created all that is and so it can be a spiritual experience" (M2).

A particular form of energy was described in detail by two of the participants – one described experiencing "an energy I don't normally have", and he enjoys serenity while at work in the creation of a symbol or art piece (M2). The second person described the energy she felt as "Divine energy" and that it is often noticeable in a group context when energy levels alter toward deeper levels and new life is released (F2).

3.3.3. An outline of the five sub-themes identified above:

An experience of the immanence of God was described by four people as their *image of God* changed and deepened through the belief that God worked through all imagery (M3, F1, F2, and F3). Symbols seem to have the potential to point to God as immeasurable, compared to what is seen or felt. The concept of the "more than" was used seven times in the course of the interview. Other similar terms were – "beyond words"(F2) and "wider vision" (F3). Four of the participants specifically described the impact that artwork had on their evolving image of God "…my image of God changed so much because (of being) open (to art)…"(M3). "…it's given me…whole new images of God which are continually changing…"(F3). In the subsequent descriptions it was stated that their relationship with God deepened as a result (M3, F1, F2, F3).

Understanding of God may be a rational function and so access to the emotions through the imagination permits appreciation of whom God is for the person. For one of the participants it was important to clarify the question of understanding God as a theological concept versus awareness or recognition of God (M1). Another participant shared the following: "…anything I create is part of God. That God created me, and when I create… I am actually God's vessel for creation; it's like I'm continuing God's work" (F2). This may have reflected relevance of this

woman's sense of God in her life as opposed to a theological argument based on academic data. She exclaimed: "…the ahh…the wonder and awe..." which captured the deeply felt emotions at the time (F2).

There were a number of references to preferred *means of prayer* by various groups: rosary, icons, and dance. Expressing one's relationship with God was described by the participants as diverse and could be for petitionary or thanksgiving purposes: "…everyone was able to pray... they were able to look at this image and say something that was very deep in their hearts." (M3).

One participant expressed the tension between images of God portrayed by the *institutional Church* and those emerging from the individual's experience of God. The challenge seemed to be to hold the two in tension and allow each to have a message – the struggle itself may yield a wealth of insight (F2). An example of the difficulty some people have in recognising God in places outside of the church building was given. In this situation the group found it difficult to believe their time of dance was in fact a time of prayer: "…it can't be, prayer has to be in a room in a church…" (F2).

There were three direct references to *scripture* in the context of the interview. Maureen described a particular group experience she was leading where the participants were asked to interpret a picture of a lady pouring water from a jug. They described the woman as representing for them the person of Mary Magdalene. Others interpreted the "pouring of water from a jug" as reminiscent of the miracle at Cana. The inference here being the way that an image is interpreted affects a person's response to it and their kind of prayer (F1).

The Emmaus story (Luke: 24:13-35) was referred to as being re-enacted by the way one group shared their personal stories. The experience of creative expression enabled the members to feel freer to trust and open their hearts to one another (F2).

One participant referred to the equal reverence due to scripture and icons in the Orthodox tradition. The understanding of icons may enable one to contemplate the scripture texts that the image is based on (M3).

From the data above some of the insights spoken about under the heading of Ignatian Spirituality in Chapter Two clearly correspond with the lived reality of the participants. Ignatius encouraged the use of imagery to facilitate the inner movement from rational to emotional levels of intuition and insight, (as outlined above in Chapter Two). This movement then has the potential to lead the person to make more life-giving decisions about their way of being: "…it was a big conversion for me to change from the logical to the images and it opens me very much to a God who can work through everything in my life…I lent

myself to the Spirit" (M3).

One of the most distinctive emphases of Ignatian teaching is its emphasis on the imagination as a way of entering contemplation. (133) In several of the reflections the participants described the experience of being absorbed or lost in the artwork while at prayer (M2, M3, F2, and F3). Or alternatively while absorbed in the creative work discovering that one is praying: "…when I am doing the artwork I am full of peace in the creation of it…it's a spiritual experience…" (M2). This may point to the relevance artwork has as access to contemplative prayer.

One of Ignatius' main concerns was that a person be drawn to God in Love through the imagination (134)**.** Although the word "love" was not overtly mentioned during the interview, its main life-giving energy was central to many of the responses. Examples include the enjoyable aspects as outlined in the question one summary, e.g. "…I enjoyed totally getting lost in…it and then this sense of wow!" (F2) and another, " I always found it (imagery) extremely freeing." (M2). This attraction to the spiritual aspect of imagery tends to concur with the description of contemplation, i.e. of being attracted to God through imaginative prayer as described in the Ignatian tradition.

It seems evident that using the imaginative processes provided a context wherein the participants could deepen their relationship with God. Therefore for some people it is an important faculty to employ while at prayer. For many it can be the context where life-changing experiences occur. This may not only be from the perspective of discovering a new image of God, but also through a more profound spirituality stemming from one's maturing relationship with God.

Concluding remarks:

This chapter has outlined the results obtained from a sample piece of research in the area of imagination and spirituality. Two emerging themes were examined in the light of insights from Ignatian Spirituality and Jungian Psychology. Analyses indicated that contemporary experience with artwork in the context of spirituality is a positive life-giving experience for many (Jung) and it may be a means for encountering the Living God (Ignatius). The concluding chapter expands further on the implications for using artwork with groups and makes recommendations to pastoral ministers in their varying ministerial fields.

Chapter Four – Implications and Recommendations

Pope John Paul II, writing to artists in New Zealand, echoes the call of pastoral ministers in the context of imaginative activity within spirituality when he said:

> Mine is an invitation to rediscover the depth of the spiritual and the religious dimension, which has been typical of art in its noblest forms in every age. (135)

His sentiments pose a challenge to the pastoral minister to honour the place of art and its capacity to arouse intimations toward the spiritual for many people. In *Gaudeum et Spes* Vatican II, while pronouncing on the development of culture, states:

> For different styles of living, different scales of values originate in different ways of using things, of working and self-expression of practising religion…of developing science and the arts and of cultivating beauty. (136)

This statement underpins the implication that for those involved in ministry in its many forms there must be an appreciation of the possibilities for spiritual expression through art, creativity and imagery. This would encourage opportunities for dialogue, spiritual guidance or conversation, and aspects of faith development. The stance of the pastoral minister would be towards readiness to "seize the moment" when those to whom he/she ministers are open to deepening their spirituality.

4.1 Implications

From the results of the research one profound level of group experience described, was the "shift in energy levels" among the group members and amid their mutual interaction. This seemed to stem from the release of positive energy that seemed to be "locked within" the individuals until they engaged in imaginative work. It is important that the pastoral minister be aware of and have experienced personally the potential for this change of energy levels. It would be relevant to the preparation of the workshop schedule, prayer time or retreat timetable. It would also call for sensitivity on the part of the pastoral minister to allow group members time for personal reflection and sharing of experiences.

Within reflective work where aspects of the unconscious may be expressed, memories triggered or issues from the past resurfaced, there may be healing moments for the individual. Opportunities are there for people to identify with their pain and suffering, their "darker" sides. Before embarking on this use of the imaginative processes, the pastoral minister must have an understanding of his/her own limitations in dealing with material from the unconscious or with painful memories emerging from individuals that may require professional help, e.g. counselling, bereavement support.

With the freedom of participants in these groups to share their experience of the imagery or symbolism comes a commonality – the

recognition of humanity's common journey. It may be described as an "Emmaus Journey" where the "eyes of the mind" are opened and people feel respected, honoured and encouraged in travelling their respective paths. This is a pastoral opportunity and may point towards consideration of using relevant material in liturgies or rituals, homilies or spiritual reflections.

The reference to using art/imagery as a means of communication was referred to on a number of occasions in the interview both as a homiletic aid and as a more compelling way of understanding concepts compared to logic or rational explanations. It was observed that what may take a long-winded description of a truth or insight can often be captured with an immediacy by an image.

Because artwork is accessible to many people, it is essential to be open to the possibility of using it with even what may appear as unlikely groups. In the research the following groups were mentioned: children ages 4-12 years, teenagers, youth, people over seventy years old, congregations, pilgrims, people with depressive illnesses, foreign volunteers, traveller women. The participants in the research all cited the positive outcome of using art forms with these groups even against their preconceptions.

4.2 This study recommends:

A number of the recommendations given here are based the research data and results. It is not an exhaustive guide, however the advice offered by those engaged in this area of work comes with the authority of experience.

Some of the aspects described by the participants in the interview, in relation to things they do not enjoy about artwork (question two of the research data) have implications for recommending artwork for other people. Most of the participants described anxiety in relation to performance, not only the insecurity when starting out or when using a new form but also the anxiety of being unable to reproduce an image from the mind into a visible art form. Also being forced to use a particular art form is unhelpful and may even be destructive to the process.

In those who have had some experience of artwork, there may be a reluctance to engage in the process for fear of being led to an inner place that is uncomfortable or distressing. Even the awareness of this inner dynamic can help the person to be less resistant and consequently let go of the fears. Therefore sensitivity when guiding others in symbolic images or artwork is essential. A variety of choices for the participants if one is engaged in group work is more helpful than restricting expression to a single form.

The variety of art forms recommended in the research interview are a tribute to the multiple forms that are effective with different people. Those advocated included: painting, painting by hand, clay, pastels / crayons, art appreciation, dance, music, mental imagery, poetry, photographs, writing music, drumming, flower arranging and ikebana.

Other art forms mentioned during the interview were: icons, guided imagery, colour appreciation, photo-language, collage, impressionist art, drawing/sketching, metal work, life maps/charts, symbolic language, and various symbol forms.

A suggestion by two participants in the case study was that the person leading the group feels "comfortable" and adept at using whatever art form or medium.

The above recommendations imply a readiness by the pastoral minister to adapt the use of imagery or symbols or creative work to the circumstances of their ministry. Each group needs to be appreciated in terms of ability and openness to the process.

Afterword

In her chapter on *Prayer and Imagination,* Kathleen Fischer captures the essence of the place of images and symbols as providing a way of expressing the inner life:

> Praying with the imagination teaches us to participate in the particular and the ordinary as a way to God. Imaginative contemplation receives the Word of God indirectly and in paradox. Images centre our awareness of God's presence within ourselves and in all of creation…the final test of any form of prayer is whether it leads us to live according to the Gospel pattern of Jesus' life"(137)

The hope for this thesis has been to invite the reader to consider this means toward prayer and to deepening one's relationship with God, as a source of energy and new life. This researcher speaks from personal and group experience and desires that others may gain from the potential richness inherent in such contexts.

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Vincentian Heritage Month

Rod Crowley

Arrival in Paris was relatively easy apart from the amount of baggage needed for a month's stay. This eventually necessitated a taxi from the Champs Elysées, where I unfortunately ended up with the airport bus. The return journey was greatly facilitated by the use of the airport shuttle. A few hours to settle, then a chance to meet the group and be welcomed by the Superior.

Day Two, and our one and only day in Paris at this time. We were introduced to the course with an opening conference on St Vincent where Tom Davitt got honourable mention. A whistle-stop tour of Vincentian Paris in the afternoon was a good overture. We met our bus-driver Arturo and saw some of the principle Vincentian sites. St Sulpice was very impressive. Vincent's association with M Olier was reinforced by a later visit to their seminary. Also it was here that the Ladies of Charity were founded – this was later recalled in Chatillon. There was also a close association with the Vincent de Paul society. So the vincentian family was beginning to emerge. The church of St Etienne reinforced this, as the place where the Society was founded. The Bons Enfants was noted in passing. We delayed a lot at St Lazare, or what remained of it, mostly a single wall. The place is put to very different use today! Some commemorative plaques were of interest; also the huge image of St Vincent in metal grills on a gable wall of a nearby building was very impressive. Time doesn't stand still; the French Revolution changed everything, as we were soon to come to realise. It was impressive to be where it all began.

Our travels began on the next day, Tuesday, just when we were beginning to settle in. In fact, we were on the road for about seventeen of the thirty days. This did emphasise the bus-tour aspect of it which suited some more than others. Unless you have your own little group, you sink or swim depending on how you get on with the group. We were three from the Irish province. The Americans tended to dominate the group by sheer force of numbers. They were, in reality, a very mixed bag also, coming from five different provinces but they tended to dominated the discussion groups. However the group experience could be very rewarding at times.

We were based in Ars for the next three or four days, taking in Taizé and Cluny on the way. It was nice to be in the house of the Curé and gain some of his spirit. Our accommodation was good, as was generally the case. The visit to Châtillon was very rewarding. The celebration of

Mass in the parish church, where Vincent only spent six months, was a moving experience. The special association with the confraternity of Charity was underlined especially in the large painting there. The words of Vincent; "Good people of Châtillon, wherever I go you will always be present to me before God" were very touching and reminiscent of Ruth's song to Naomi. We visited the castle and saw the notice of a forthcoming celebration of St Vincent. With its association with Monsieur Vincent, this was a well-worthwhile visit; memorable especially for its cake.

Lyons was our next stop with its magnificent cathedral (of which there seemed to be so many on the tour!) dating back hundreds of years. Frederic Ozanam had links here also.

Friday centred on Catherine Labouré. Here, as everywhere, we experienced the kindness of the Daughters of Charity. The Hospice in Beaune was a fascinating place and gave an unexpectedly good impression of early medical care. Fain-les-Moutiers was certainly one of those places where 'poor country girls' would come from. Where do seers come from?

Back then to Paris and the Founder. A cruise on the Seine afforded a pleasant interlude to view some of the grandeurs of Paris. Earlier, a Mass in St Sulpice indicated that the French Church still has some life in it.

A visit to the archives and museum afforded some interesting items; it seemed a very French scene. We were also given two interesting conferences on the apostolate and common life. The Constitutions have a lot to offer; certainly offering me food for thought as regards our involvement in parishes. Jack Harris was good on community life.

We set off for Château-L'Evèque, the unlikely scene of Vincent's ordination; somewhat a 'hole-in-the-corner' affair it would seem. It was still good to be there. Big celebrations were planned for later in the year. Richelieu then entered the tale; what a strange figure, a veritable prince of the Church; churchman or politician first?

Scenes from the history of the CM proved fascinating at times. The role of Fr Etienne for example; it seems that it is not a new experience for the Congregation to be on the rocks. His approach was very monastic and French in its early days.

The visit to Château de la Mission proved to be a special experience, enhanced by two magnificent glasses of red and white wine for each of us. This was a real success story for the Vincentians. We were welcomed like long-lost cousins. Perhaps such a noble undertaking should be included as one of the ends of the Congregation!

The Berceau where, in a real sense, it all began. The oak tree seems to be our closest link to Vincent. The strength and vitality and

usefulness of the oak is not a bad image for our life and mission. We experienced fine accommodation in a place of peace and quiet; simplicity, rather than poverty, the key-note. Interesting to see where it all led to, as we looked at Vincent's life depicted in the Church windows. Buglose was a rewarding pilgrimage – peace and quiet and simplicity there too. The open-air museum was a great experience; you could really imagine Vincent's life and times – hard work was the order of the day. Class divisions of those times were much in evidence.

The Sunday excursion to St Jean de Luz was much appreciated since it included a swim there. After some sightseeing (with a US confrere who had worked in the Solomon Islands) we had the evening meal in Dax, en plein air, which was a very pleasant conclusion to the day.

Our trip to Spain involved a lot of travelling but it proved to be well worth it. Our Spanish confrere, Julian Diaz, came into his own at this stage. The hills and valleys we traversed afforded a most picturesque scene; fortunately our driver was very reliable! We experienced lavish Spanish hospitality in a way we could never have imagined – and it was largely repeated that same evening in Pamplona. One of their confreres was delayed in coming due to his involvement in prison chaplaincy. They still seem to have some vocations in those parts. Our usual tour took off after this wonderful meal. The Cathedral and Church of Nuestra Señora de la Pilar was an impressive sight with its magnificent stained glass. The college was much more closely associated with St Vincent and he is well remembered there. One inscription revealed that he worked as a servant there to help pay his fees – like many of today's students working in cafes and bars. The sacristy revealed an amazing hoard of treasure trove left behind by the departing Jesuits and long undiscovered. It's extraordinary how Vincent got there; perhaps it was the Basque connection. It seems that Mgr Escriva de Balaguer is also associated with this place but our guide was much less forthcoming on this connection. It seems he doesn't set much store by it.

We arrived in Pamplona but there were no bulls in sight. Still, the confreres received us well and fattened us up like prize bulls! It is a very strong centre for the Miraculous Medal devotion, with a highly ornamented chapel depicting St Vincent.

Off to Lourdes the next day, with a lengthy stop-over at Loyola; a very impressive setting. The museum of St Ignatius was a fascinating presentation with never a dull moment. His background was a great deal more noble than St Vincent's. What I found to be of particular interest was the series of statements by Pedro Arrupe festooning the Church and focussing especially on Justice and Peace and Spirituality. Are we worthy even to be their satchel bearers?

On then to San Sebastian where the confreres greeted us. Lourdes was a flying visit and not very comfortable. We did, however, take in the candle-light procession, a visit to the Grotto (where a group from Limerick was presiding) and a Mass in a very side chapel of the crypt. We can say we were there!

We then headed to Toulouse, having a Moroccan meal en route. The cathedral in Toulouse is certainly an impressive sight. There we were able to honour St Thomas Aquinas. We were also able to visit the house from which St Vincent commuted to his lectures in Theology and Canon Law. Part of the former library is included in the present chapel. This was the second seat of learning where we encountered St Vincent.

The next day's trip Buzet proved interesting. We were able to see the building which housed St Vincent's school which he established, apparently to gain money for his studies. There were no facilities for sports! The Church of Nôtre Dame de la Grace depicts Vincent celebrating a 'first' Mass there.

Our next goal was Mongesty in search of Jean-Gabriel Perboyre. There, in a remote village, we came across his family home. It largely remains intact while other houses in the area have been added to. Members of his family still live there. A lady, a descendent of the family, gave us a very interesting talk about his background so that he really came alive for us. Statues and paintings of him abound. It was particularly interesting as we had a Chinese confrere as part of our group.

The next day marked our return to Paris. But en route we stopped off at Angers, which is so closely associated with the martyrdom of some Daughters of Charity. We saw the hospital where they worked, the place where they were imprisoned and the site of their execution along with so many others. Truly, a courageous witness in life and in death. We were shown the mass graves in which they were thrown and we prayed in the nearby chapel where all the names are listed. It was a moving experience; O quel horreur!

Back in Paris once more, we began the concluding week. We started with a day off in Paris beginning with Mass in the confreres' church; a fairly scanty congregation. We had traditional aperitifs before lunch and, this time, no red tickets required for lunch! Then off to the Musée d'Orsay with Jerome Fortenberry from the US, who works as a prison chaplain, and who kindly donated his book on the way of St Vincent, which I lacked. A stroll in the evening with the Irish group was rounded off with a quiet beer in Montparnasse.

Monday began with our eighth conference (three more to come) on the CM saints. There was quite a lot of interesting information.

Vincentian Versailles revealed that we had two parishes there – surprise, surprise – which reminded me of our current chaplaincy to the President of Ireland. Mind you, being chaplains to the king led to two or more Vincentians losing their heads! We had an interesting tour of the place with John Rybolt, who was his usual mine of information.

We had a very interesting hour or two at a roadside café with Augustine Chang who told us a great deal about himself, his family background and his times in China. We followed with a slap-up meal in a steak-house before boarding our train for the Rue de Sèvres.

On Tuesday, we went by bus to Folleville which was, in so many ways, the high-point of my trip. The very pulpit from which Vincent preached his famous sermon and so many marks of him in the Church. The division between the nobles and the peasants was very clearly marked; even in the Church! The nearby château was also very evocative.

We stopped then at Amiens for lunch, which provided us with an opportunity to visit the very magnificent cathedral, where a strong devotion to John the Baptist was evident. We also had a visit to the DC archives and museum. I never got to the archives but functioned twice as translator in the museum and so got to know the DC Mothers General very well, as they were described to us by a very intelligent Daughter of Charity. We even heard of the 'schism'.

Our final conferences were very interesting and dealt with, among other topics, Bugnini and, later, the coffee scandal. We were shown the card of the (ex-)confrere at the centre of it. A close shave!

We had a visit to Vincent's other parish at Clichy in the afternoon, in which he had maintained an 'interest' for a number of years. He helped in the rebuilding of the Church. There were many signs of his presence there; including a fine statue outside and a dead 'Judas' tree which he planted. He seems to have been a good parish priest and certainly had a good relationship with his people.

Thursday was Ozanam day, which included an excellent barbeque in the grounds of the Mother-House. What would St Vincent have said? – still, it was a great occasion. In the evening we had a walk to the Carmelite church, where many had suffered for the faith. We visited Fredèric's tomb which is in a good setting and where we said Mass. We were also shown the family version of the tomb erected by his wife. An earlier visit to the headquarters of the Vincent de Paul Society completed our study of this branch of the vincentian family. Did Fredèric know what he was starting? He lived such a short but fruitful life. In the evening, the Irish CMs went out for a meal together; a happy reunion after all these years.

On Friday, we had a closing Mass beneath the body of St Vincent with confreres from all parts of the world; USA, Ireland, Indonesia, China, Fiji. We were all fortified by a good injection of the spirit of St Vincent, largely thanks to the efforts of John Rybolt and all who had underwritten it. We had a farewell meal together, embellished by some bottles of Château de la Mission!

Au revoir, Paris et la belle France! Une belle occasion, grâce á Dieu.

Frederick Ozanam

Thomas Davitt CM

Introduction

The word "founder" is applied to both Vincent de Paul and Frederick Ozanam. Vincent was the founder of the Congregation of the Mission, and Frederick was the founder of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. And furthermore, each of these men, after founding the group in question, continued to administer the group until his death. Yet when the matter is investigated further we see that there is an enormous difference between the ways in which each of these men was the founder of his group.

Vincent was a priest actively engaged in ministry, and he gradually came to the conclusion that a group, permanently dedicated to preaching missions, was needed in France at that time. He founded the group, and continued in full-time ministry within that group. He did not have any other work.

Frederick was a full-time university student when he founded his group. While being actively engaged in the work of the group he had to continue as a university student working for his degrees. When he qualified at the end of his studies, he had to get work and earn his living as well as continuing to be involved in the administration of the Society. Vincent, so to speak, was travelling all the time on one road, whereas Frederick had to keep switching between two roads all through his life. He never became a full-time worker with the Society. Much that has been written and spoken about Frederick tends to focus mainly on his work for the Society, without sufficient attention being paid to his studies in his student days and to his professional life afterwards.

Background

Frédéric-Antoine Ozanam was born in Milan on 23 April 1813. He was the fifth child of his parents. His father had been in the French army for five years, 1793-98, during the revolutionary period. He apparently resigned, as a captain, in disagreement with the rise to prominence of Napoleon Bonaparte. He got married in Lyons, to the daughter of an American lady, and they settled in Paris in the silk business; he was twenty-seven years old. Their business went bankrupt because he had gone surety for someone, and had to pay up. He was by this time thirty-six, and decided to go to Milan, which was under French domination at the time, and where he had made friends while in the army. Before joining the army at the age of twenty he had been well educated, so he

started earning his livelihood in Milan as a private tutor. He wanted, though, to earn a better income so he decided to study medicine and become a doctor. Because of his intelligence coupled with hard work at his studies he qualified as a doctor in two years. He quickly built up a good medical practice and also won some fame by a medical book which he wrote.

When Frederick was born in April 1813 his parents had already had four children, of whom two had died in infancy. After Frederick's birth nine more children were born, but of the whole fourteen only four lived beyond childhood, and of those a daughter died at the age of nineteen. Of the three who survived into adulthood Alphonse became a priest, Frederick was next, and then Charles, who followed his father into the medical profession. When the French lost Milan to the Austrians in 1816 the Ozanam family moved to Lyons; Frederick was three.

We have already seen something of the sort of man the father was, with his varied careers. But he was also interested in literature, in history, and after his day's medical work was over would read those sorts of books to his children. Frederick inherited those interests. The father was also a sincerely religious man, and gave much medical attention without charge. This side of his character, also, was inherited by Frederick.

The boy's health was never excellent, and he was dangerously ill with typhus at the age of six. His elder brother later said that as a child Frederick was quick-tempered and stubborn, but also sensitive and compassionate.

Early education

He was educated at home by both his parents up to the age of nine, when he was sent to the Royal College of Lyons. He turned out to be a brilliant student, and became enormously interested in literature.

During his mid-teens he began to have doubts about his religion, probably largely because of his intellectual brilliance. He took his doubts to a priest who was his teacher of philosophy in the college, and on long walks into the countryside after class they discussed all such matters until Frederick's faith was strong and secure. He never had any doubts later, and became a constant defender of the faith both as a speaker and writer.

He wished to go on to study literature in the university, but his father wanted him to enter the legal profession. Frederick, as would have been normal in those days, did what his father wanted and became a clerk in a legal office because his father thought that, at seventeen, he was too young to start legal studies in the university. In recognition of his son's interest in literature his father got a tutor to teach him German at home.

He was already bilingual in Italian and French, and at school he had studied Latin and Greek. He now had a tutor in German, but he also studied English and Hebrew on his own. This gift for languages was only one aspect of his intellectual capability.

He started writing in a magazine which the professor of philosophy, to whom I already referred, had started for pupils and alumni of the Royal College. He quickly moved on to writing letters to the papers answering anti-religious letters or articles. At the age of eighteen he wrote a one-hundred page book defending Catholicism against an attack which was currently going on. This book was very well received, even by important literary figures of the time, such as Lamennais, Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

After Frederick's eighteenth birthday in 1831, his father decided that it was time for him to start his legal studies and, on 2 November of that year, he left for Paris to enrol in the university there. The first part of the journey was by steamer up the Saône to Chalon, and then onward by stagecoach.

University days in Paris

He enrolled in the legal school, naturally enough, but also in the Collège de France and the Sorbonne for history and philosophy. His mother had made some arrangements through a friend for Frederick's lodgings in Paris, but when he got there he found that something had gone wrong somewhere and he was in an unsuitable house with unsuitable fellow-lodgers. He was the only practising Catholic there and was the target of many anti-religious jokes and remarks. The house was in the parish of Saint-Etienne du Mont, near the Pantheon, in the student quarter of the city.

Some time earlier in Lyons he had met the famous scientist André-Marie Ampère, and as this man lived in the same parish Ozanam paid a courtesy visit to him. He was asked about his lodgings, and when Ampère heard Frederick's description of them he immediately offered to take Frederick into his own house. In a letter to his father, dated 12 November 1831, Frederick wrote:

> Tuesday I went to pay a courtesy visit to M. Ampère…whom I had met in Lyons…After giving me a most cordial welcome he asked several questions about my situation in Paris and the price of my *pension*, then getting up at once he took me to a most agreeable room occupied until the present by his son, and there: "I offer you", he said, "table and lodging with me at the same price as your *pension"* (1).

Frederick, of course took the offer and became more or less a member of the Ampère family. The son was studying in Germany, and Ampère allowed Frederick to use his son's books, and also got him permission to use some very important libraries in Paris. As the letter to his father was dated 12 November, he obviously spent only a few days in his first unsuitable lodgings. About seven weeks later, on New Year's Day 1832, Frederick made another social call, this time on François-René de Chateaubriand, who had written to him in Lyons to congratulate him on his small book in defence of religion. Within a short time he also met the poet Lamartine, the writer Montalembert and a priest who was famous as a writer and educationalist, Félicité-Robert de Lamennais, and Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire, the famous preacher. Later on, when some of these men took directions which Frederick could not follow, he dissociated himself from them. That a teenager not yet nineteen could make these contacts and be accepted by these famous men shows, I think, that we are not looking at a normal teenager; he obviously was exceptional.

In a letter, to his mother, around this time, he said that he studied law for about eight hours a day, and also read a huge amount in history, philosophy and literature.

In 1832 a cholera epidemic broke out in Paris and some sort of civil unrest in Lyons. His parents wanted him to return home, and he would have liked to go but he pointed out that his examinations were approaching and he needed to study hard for them. Also, he had started following the example of his father by visiting in their homes those stricken with cholera.

As well as meeting the famous men mentioned earlier Frederick also made friends among his fellow students, especially those who were as interested as himself in matters of religion. One of the things they started doing, as early as four months after Frederick's arrival in Paris, was to object every time a professor attacked religion in his lectures. They spoke up in class and also sent written objections to the lecturer, which he had to acknowledge and deal with in class. They decided that something further was needed, and they asked a priest who taught in the theology faculty of the university to give a series of lectures on the philosophy of history, which were well attended by students. Frederick and his group of friends felt that still more needed to be done, and they formed an official group within the university, which would meet regularly for debates and discussions on religious matters. They called it the Conference of History, as "conférence" was the French word used for all such societies in the university. They normally met in the house of a man named Emmanuel Bailly, who ran a newspaper *La Tribune*

Catholique. He was twenty-two years older than Frederick. Before the revolution of 1830 he had had the same sort of ideas as Frederick now had. The idea behind the conference was to prepare the students to be better able to defend their religion against attacks by lecturers or fellow students. In March 1833 Frederick reported that there was a continuous stream of students wanting to join the conference.

The next step in the development of these student gatherings came about in answer to a taunt, which was thrown at one of them at a meeting. The taunter said that all these students were good at was debating and discussion; they never did anything practical to show the reality of their religious commitment. After much discussion and reflection on this matter Frederick came to the conclusion that some form of practical charitable work was the answer.

Less than a year later, on 7 January 1834, he wrote a letter to his cousin, Ernest Falconnet. He was two years younger than Frederick, and also a student of law, and a regular correspondent. This letter contains the following very interesting paragraph about himself:

> Because God and education have endowed me with a certain tact, a certain appreciation of ideas, a certain breadth of tolerance, they wish to make me a sort of leader of Catholic youth in this country. Numerous young people full of merit accord me an esteem of which I feel myself very unworthy, and men of mature years have approached me. I must be at the head of all endeavours, and whenever there is something difficult to be done it must be I who bears the burden. Impossible to have a meeting, a conference on law or literature unless I chair it. Five or six groups of journals ask me for articles. In a word, a crowd of circumstances independent of my will assail me, pursue me, turn me aside from the path I have laid out for myself. (2)

He was not yet twenty-one when he wrote that. Like the easy contacts which he had made with famous men on his arrival in Paris, this self-assessment indicates that he was somewhat unusual among the students.

But getting back to the previous year, the spring of 1833, we find that after coming to the decision that some form of practical charitable work was the answer to the taunt, Frederick immediately began to put this into practice. One other student and himself brought wood and coal to the unheated room of a poor family.

The origins of the Society of St Vincent de Paul

That first visit of Ozanam and one fellow student to the room of a poor

family was not a once-off thing. Ozanam realised that there were many such poor people in Paris, and that visits such as he and his friend had made needed to be followed up. He found that three other fellow students were eager to join him in such charitable work, and the four of them discussed this with Bailly. He was enthusiastic, and recommended them to have a talk about it with their local parish priest in Saint Etienne-du-Mont. This man did not really understand what the students wanted to do and suggested that they could teach catechism to the children of the parish. Naturally enough, Ozanam did not follow this suggestion. He knew that at least two more members of the Conference of History would be willing to join himself and the other three, so he called a meeting in the office of Bailly's newspaper on 23 April 1833 (3). The exact number who attended the meeting is not on record, but there were at least five students as well as Ozanam and Bailly. Bailly was asked to preside. He praised the students for what they had started and made many practical suggestions. The help given should be food, wood, clothing and so on, rather than money. The members should also pay attention to the moral and spiritual poverty of the people they were to visit, and not just their material poverty. As the students did not really know who were the most needy persons in the parish, Bailly put them in contact with a Daughter of Charity, Sister Rosalie Rendu, who was doing extraordinary charitable work in the area. Bailly also suggested St Vincent de Paul as patron of the new group, as his parents had great devotion to him and his father had a collection of original manuscripts written by Vincent (I wonder what became of that collection?) Finally, Bailly was made first president of the group, which took the name of The Conference of Charity, following the university custom of calling such student groups conferences.

After the first meeting the group of six students and Bailly met once a week to organise their visits and to report on what they had done during the previous week. They started the meeting with prayer, read from *The Imitation of Christ* and took up a secret collection to finance their charitable work. Even though Bailly was president and presided at the meetings, it was Ozanam who really was the leader, because of his natural qualities and greater grasp of what was needed and how the needs could best be met.

Ozanam spent the summer holidays of 1833 with his parents and brothers, first in Lyons and then in Italy, including a visit to Rome. His father still insisted on Frederick continuing his legal studies, and also that he qualify as a barrister, who would plead cases in court. His father's ultimate hope was that after practising for some time at the bar he would become a judge. Frederick went along with his father's wishes

and returned to Paris for his third year of law studies. However, while being faithful to his father's wishes he also followed his own personal preferences and spent a lot of time in reading philosophy, history and literature. And, of course, the charitable work continued in the new academic year of 1833-34.

The little group had chosen St Vincent de Paul as their patron, and they asked his intercession at their meetings. In the year after the start of the Conference they had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to venerate his relics. At the time of the revolution in 1830 the body of St Vincent had been removed from the Motherhouse in Paris to a secret hiding place, for reasons of safety. In April 1834 it was brought back, just before the feast of the Translation of the Relics, which commemorated the solemn installation of his body over the high altar in April 1830, the first time it had been on public display since the French Revolution. The day before the celebration of this feast in 1834, Bailly, who had a brother in the Congregation, obtained permission for the Conference, which now had about sixty members, to visit the relics in a room off the sacristy, before they were re-positioned over the altar the following day.

I have often wondered whether on that day Ozanam might have met John Gabriel Perboyre. John Gabriel had been appointed to the Motherhouse in August 1832 and did not leave for China till March 1835. He was the youngest priest in the house, and I feel sure he would have known, from the Daughters of Charity, what these students were doing in an area not all that far from the Motherhouse. Also, both Ozanam and himself had been fans of Lamennais, who at that stage was in some difficulties with the Church. If they did meet, neither man seems to have left any record of having done so.

At the end of the 1833-34 academic year he completed his legal studies and could, if he wished, apply for admission to the bar to practise in the courts. He returned to his family in Lyons for the summer of 1834. He gradually found that he missed Paris very much, the whole "buzz" of the academic student life, lectures, debates, meetings, especially concerning non-legal matters such as history and literature. He also missed the weekly charitable work of the Conference, though he laid the foundations for establishing the same work in Lyons. He must have discussed all this with his parents, because in the autumn of 1834 he wrote to a friend that his father had agreed to allow him spend two more years in Paris. This was to enable him to continue his legal studies up to the level of doctorate. He also told his friend that he was going to study oriental languages as well.

The membership of the Conference had grown steadily and by the

end of 1834 was around one hundred. At one of the weekly meetings towards the end of the year a member suggested that with so many members now the Conference should split into three and each continue its work in three different areas, while all three remained parts of the overall movement. This suggestion caused an enormous amount of heated discussion, with some of the original members on each side. Ozanam, in spite of the emotional wrench it would be to him for the original small group to be separated, was in favour of division so that the charitable work would be more widespread. An important element in the discussions was that Sister Rosalie Rendu was in favour of the division of the work. Eventually it was agreed to divide into three Conferences, which would maintain a link with each other.

It was quickly realised that if such a link was to be genuine some sort of rule would have to be drafted, which all three Conferences, and any others in the future, would follow. François Lallier, one of the original small group, was appointed to draw up a draft of the proposed rule. Bailly and Ozanam collaborated with him. It is interesting to note the order in which the aims of the Conferences are set out:

> Firstly, to maintain its members, by mutual example and advice, in the practice of a Christian life; secondly, to visit the poor at their dwellings, to bring them succour in kind, to afford them, also, religious consolation. (4)

These two aims are then followed by various practical items. The interesting point is that the spiritual welfare of the members is the first aim.

In the summer of 1835 he returned to Lyons to spend the holidays with his family. He found that his mother was quite ill. He had a short holiday away from Lyons with his priest brother, Alphonse, and then returned home. He began work on *Les Deux Chancelliers d'Angleterre*, a study of Thomas à Becket and Roger Bacon. Becket had been Lord Chancellor of England in the reign of Henry II, and Bacon had held the same office in the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. Ozanam's approach to his theme was that Becket was a product of Christian learning and Bacon of rationalist philosophy. The work was first serialised in *La Revue Européenne*, and then published in book form. It was Ozanam's first book since the small one in defence of religion, which he had written as a teenager; he had, of course, written a large number of articles all through his time in Paris.

In November 1835 he returned to Paris to work on the final preparation of his theses for the doctorate in laws, but continued as well his charitable work in the Society of St Vincent de Paul. The word "Society" seems to have been first used around this time. In April 1836

he defended with distinction his two theses, one in Roman Law and the other in French Law. He stayed on in Paris preparing for his doctorate in Literature, still preferring literature to law.

In the summer of 1836 he returned, as usual, to Lyons. He was admitted to the bar and was ready to start practice as a barrister when the legal term opened. He also established the Society of St Vincent de Paul in the city. He practised in the courts all through the winter, even though he was somewhat disedified by the whole legal atmosphere. There was some possibility that he might be named as professor of commercial law in the university in Lyons, so he put in a lot of work on that branch of the law. In the spring of 1837 he returned to Paris to do research for his thesis on Dante for his doctorate in literature, and also further research in commercial law. He resumed his involvement with the Society of St Vincent de Paul. In May he was summoned back to Lyons, but with the postal and travel facilities of the time he was unable to get home before his father died. He had fallen down the stairs of a tenement when visiting some poor person, and injured himself fatally.

The death of his father meant that Frederick had to take on responsibility for the family. His older brother the priest was absent, his mother was still unwell, and his younger brother Charles was away at medical school. Frederick was not earning enough as a barrister so he took on the extra work of tutoring students. He continued writing on various topics, including an important small book on the origins of French law. He was also involved in the charitable work of the Society. He was back in Paris at the start of 1839 to defend his theses for the doctorate in literature. The first had to be defended in Latin, on classical heroes and the infernal regions. Then, in French, his thesis on the philosophy of Dante and his *Divine Comedy*. He did brilliantly in his defence and won loud applause from the examiners and the audience present. This success preceded him to Lyons, and when he returned he was immediately offered the professorship of commercial law in Lyons, or the professorship of philosophy in Orleans. The latter would have been more congenial to him, but he opted for the post in Lyons because of the health of his mother. She died later that year, 1839.

Earning his living

When he started lecturing in law he adopted a different approach from that of previous professors. He concentrated on teaching legal principles and explaining legal wisdom, instead of giving detailed expositions of debatable points. His approach obviously worked well, because his lectures were crowded. He said later that he used to avail of opportunities in his lectures to go off on a tangent into the areas of history or

philosophy, and also to raise a laugh from the students when he could. The rector of the University of Lyons realised what an extraordinarily gifted teacher he had acquired, and was very anxious to do all he could to retain him and not lose him to the Sorbonne in Paris. The law lectureship did not provide a very good salary, so the rector decided to offer Ozanam, in addition, the chair of foreign literature. As Ozanam had an excellent command of five modern and three classical languages he was well suited for the post, but his Christian approach made him very different from that of the outgoing man, and this meant that there would be opposition. He went to Paris to elicit the help of the Minister of Education, who had been so impressed with his thesis on Dante. The minister guaranteed that he would get Ozanam the appointment in Lyons, but only on condition that Ozanam would enter the forthcoming competition for the newly founded professorship of foreign literature at the Sorbonne. He told Ozanam that he did not expect him to win the chair, but that the experience would be good and his performance would certainly help his future career. The competition was in September 1840, giving him only four or five months in which to prepare.

There were seven other competitors; all with well established reputations, and all having the advantages of being based in Paris. There were two theses to be defended, one in Latin and one in French. The defence in each case was of eight hours duration. Then there were three days of examinations on Greek, Latin and French texts, followed by one day on German, Spanish, English and Italian literature. He introduced his Christian attitude to literature when it was appropriate, even though he knew that this would not be popular with many of the examiners. In a letter to François Lallier, one of the original foundation group of the Society, he said:

> I do not want you to learn from the newspaper about the wonderful success I have just had. After the long trials in which your friendship involved itself for me I have been named first in the *Agrégation*. As a result I have been offered immediate entry at the Sorbonne as substitute for M. Fauriel. (5)

In spite of his being the youngest and least known of the eight, and in spite of his Christianity, he achieved first place. The agreement then was that he would return to Lyons and continue his law lectures, taking on also those in literature, until the arrangements for the new professorship in the Sorbonne were completed. Instead of this, the offer mentioned in his letter came up and he availed of it, even though it involved leaving Lyons and going to live in Paris. It was a temporary replacement for

Fauriel, apparently for reasons of the latter's health.

Making the move to Paris was a difficult decision. He would be taking a temporary drop in salary, and he would be leaving his native town for good. But there was also another factor. The rector of the university of Lyons had been so good to him that they had become close friends and Ozanam had been a frequent visitor at the rector's house. This in turn led to Ozanam's falling in love with the rector's daughter Amélie. In June 1841, after Ozanam's first year of lecturing in Paris, he married Amélie Soulacroix. Frederick was 28 and Amélie 21. Her father was unexpectedly offered a post in the Ministry of Education in Paris, so the whole Soulacroix family set up home in Paris.

It should be remembered that all through these times of examinations and lecturing Ozanam's health was never very good, and he had to take breaks for rest and treatments of various sorts. Yet in spite of this he seemed to have a fantastic capacity for hard work. And, on top of that, he was still very active in the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

His lecturing career in Paris began in January 1841 and he was an instant success. His lectures were reported on very favourably in newspapers and reviews, and some of his material on German literature was reprinted in Germany. Whenever appropriate he continued to treat literature from the Christian perspective, and was able to achieve success in the very lecture halls where in his own student days Christianity was attacked and ridiculed. In spite of his professional workload at the university, not to mention his charitable work and his poor health, he took on extra teaching at the Collège Stanislas, a very famous secondary school in Paris. And there he did not confine himself to just his teaching, but made himself available to the students for any sort of help they needed. One author calls this his "stupendous apostolate of friendliness" (6). In passing, I should mention that by this time the Society had about 2,000 members in Paris and some other French cities.

One of his former students at the Collège Stanislas, who later became a professor of philosophy, described what Ozanam was like in those days:

> I remember, as if it was only yesterday, the first day that we came into the classroom. The first impression was one of curiosity, and I must say, of a rather jeering kind. Ozanam was neither handsome, elegant nor graceful. His appearance was common-place, his manner awkward and embarrassed. Extreme short-sightedness, and a tangled mass of hair, completed a rather strange ensemble. A spirit of malice in the class was however rapidly replaced by a feeling of sympathy. It was impossible to remain long insensible to an

> expression of kindliness coming direct from the heart through a face which, if somewhat heavy, was yet not without distinction. Then, a smile of beautiful refinement, and at moments, a flashing intelligence transformed the face, as if it had suddenly been illumined by a ray of light from the soul. He unbent willingly with a gaiety, with a laugh so boyish and so natural, a wit so charming and so well turned, that it was a delight to find him in one of those happy moments when he let himself go…
>
> As years went on, Ozanam's former school pupils, now university students, were his friends. I never knew a master so beloved. Young men were inevitably attracted to him, and the sympathy was mutual and loyal. Once they had come to know him, they never left him (7)

Fauriel, for whom Ozanam was deputising, died suddenly in July 1844, and the question immediately arose as to whether Ozanam would be made his permanent successor. He had made an enormous impact on the students in his lectures, and his intelligence, learning and capacity for work were obvious to all concerned. However, his unflagging adhesion to Christian principles made him many enemies who did not want to see such a committed Catholic in such a place of influence in the Sorbonne which the permanent successor to Fauriel would have. In spite of the opposition Ozanam got the post. His name was put forward by the Faculty, and then unanimously recommended by the Academic Council. The final step, authorisation by the Minister of Education, was not immediately forthcoming, but eventually it happened. Ozanam reported in a letter, dated 23 November 1844:

The matter is settled at last. It was closed yesterday when I made the statutory declaration before the Dean. It became official today and will become known to my friends through all the usual avenues of publicity. (8)

In the summer of 1845 Ozanam's only child was born, a daughter who was christened Marie.

There seems to be no doubt that he overworked in these years, and that he taxed his never strong health too much. His remedy for this situation was always travel, as a religious, historical and literary pilgrim, and he brought back from his travels material which he later used for articles and books. In the summer of 1846 he had a bad bout of fever, and the Minister of Education granted him a year's absence on study leave, commissioning him to do historical research in Italy. His wife and infant daughter accompanied him on this journey, which lasted eight months. He went to places associated with Dante, deepening his knowl-

edge of the poet, gathering material which would later be used in his lectures, and later still published. He also travelled through Umbria, on the trail of Franciscan poets, material which again would end up in a book. They went down to Rome and at an audience the Pope let him know that he already knew about the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

In December 1847 he resumed his lecturing at the Sorbonne, and received an enthusiastic welcome at his first lecture. 1848 was a year of political unrest in France, and Ozanam took on a new responsibility, somewhat unexpected in a man like him. He joined the National Guard, offering his services in the event of any armed uprising. He had his uniform, and was, in fact, called to duty on some occasions, manning guard posts and so on. He also allowed his name to be put forward as a candidate for Lyons in the national elections that year. He got about 16,000 votes, which was not sufficient to have him elected. He wrote to his brother that that number indicated that if he had been nominated earlier, and if he had had the opportunity of running an organised campaign, he would probably have been elected. (9)

In 1849, 1850 and 1851 he was again ordered by his doctors to rest and take vacations. In 1851 he was in Dieppe with his old friend, Jean-Jacques Ampère, the son of the famous scientist. Ampère suggested that as Dieppe was so close to England they should cross the Channel, so that he could visit the industrial exhibition in the Crystal Palace and Ozanam could breathe the air of Shakespeare's country. Ampère referred to this trip in a letter:

> I made a little trip with him and Madame Ozanam to see the Exhibition in England. I was more enthusiastic than he over the wonders of industry. We did not on this occasion seem to be one in admiration, as we had been, when considering Dante and the Niebelungen. He was of opinion that I admired England too much and overlooked the Irish unduly. He left me to return alone to the Crystal Palace, in order to have time to visit the slum tenements of poor Irish Catholics. He returned in a state of great emotion: also I suspect somewhat poorer than when he went. (10)

The Society of St Vincent de Paul had come to both London and Dublin in 1844, and during the great Irish Famine in 1846-47 the Society in France had sent a large sum of money for relief. In 1848, after the riots in Paris, the Society in Dublin sent money for the relief of those affected by the troubles in Paris.

It seems to me that Ozanam's ideas and those of his doctors were

totally different as regards what he should be doing on the vacations which the doctors ordered him to take. His health was not improving, and his work did not decrease. His work was his teaching, his writing and his involvement with the Society. Around 1850 he began to realise that he probably would not live long. In that year he was 37 years old. One of the things that worried him as a result of this was that he would be unable to write all the books and articles which he had in mind. On the other hand, though, we must remember that his collected works, published as a set after his death, ran to eleven volumes. They dealt with Dante, the Franciscan poets, German literature, civilisation in the fifth century and various other religious, historical and literary topics.

He worked sixteen hours a day, in spite of the state of his health. Along with all his professional work he was still active in the Society which he had founded. One author summarised his approach to the question of poverty as "he sought the causes…and proposed a remedy" (11). He himself gave one tenth of his income to the poor.

But his health did not improve, and in 1852 he gave his last lecture at the Sorbonne and headed off once more on a vacation which was supposed to be a rest cure. He went with his family to the south of France, and on into Italy. He took the opportunity of visiting conferences of the Society in many places, and giving talks to them. All the time his health was deteriorating, and a decision was taken to get him back from Italy to Marseilles. All this was eventually too much for him and he died in Marseilles on 8 September 1853, a few months after his fortieth birthday.

Notes

1. Dirvin, Joseph I, C.M.: *Frédéric Ozanam, A Life in Letters*, Society of St Vincent de Paul Council of the United States, 1986, p. 16.
2. *Ibid*., p. 43.
3. *Origines de la Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul, d'après les Souvenirs de ses Premiers Membres*, 2e édition [1920/1960, Paris] p. 17.
4. Schimberg, Albert Paul: *The Great Friend: Frederick Ozanam*, Milwaukee, 1946, pp., 103-104.
5. Dirvin, *op. cit*., p.196.
6. Schimberg, op. cit., p. 149.
7. Baunard, Mgr [Louis]: *Ozanam in his Correspondence*, Translated by a Member of the Council of Ireland of the Society of St Vincent de Paul [T.A.Murphy], Dublin, 1925, pp. 204-205.
8. Baunard: *Op. cit*., p. 223.
9. Schimberg: *Op. cit*., p. 168.
10. Baunard: *Op. cit*., p. 337.
11. Schimberg: *Op. cit*., p. 209.

Relics, miracles and refounding

Tom Lane CM

When the relics of St Thérèse were being seen off at Lisieux for the beginning of the journey to Ireland, on Easter Sunday 2001, the prioress prayed that Thérèse's Irish visit would result in many miracles. It is unlikely that she was wishing for miracles that can only be authenticated at a medical bureau. More likely she was hoping for the kind that accompanied the spread of the medal that, nearly two hundred years earlier, the people spontaneously called miraculous.

When Catherine Labouré was a novice she entered with great fervour into the journey through Paris of another set of relics, the translation of the relics of St Vincent. It was in the time leading up to what some would call the refounding of the Congregation of the Mission. Refounding time can be a graced opportunity for communities to draw again from the pure wells of their origins and to empty themselves of baggage that had been piling up over the years.

It would be wonderful to think that our province had its beginnings from such pure wells. The reality is that we emerged at a time of some muddying of the waters and of some new baggage. In particular, it is worth asking whether and with what consequences our Irish Vincentian beginnings were coloured by the Jansenism that had officially passed its sell-by date but the spirit of which lingered on in many communities and was later to have considerable influence in shaping the spirituality of St Thérèse. During her Irish journey, the thought of this led me to ask a question and to dream a dream. The question is whether our final shedding of Jansenist-related influences in recent years has helped us to be re-filled or whether it has left us with a certain emptiness. My dream is of nothing less than a miracle of new life at a time when our province has a lot of vitality but seems to be on the road to extinction. In dealing with both the question and the dream I am not attempting an essay in history; I am reflecting on my own experience of Vincentian living for over fifty years. I will be making a few forays into the world of the Daughters of Charity whom I have come to know and admire.

The passing of Jansenism

There can be no denying the Jansenist colourings in the religious formation of the woman whose relics journeyed through Ireland. She succeeded in turning all of these on their heads by offering herself as a victim not of God's justice but of God's love. In doing so, she prompts us to ask whether, in God, justice and love are identical. As I ask myself

this question, I am proud that our founder was so influential in the rejection of Jansenism. My pride doesn't rule out the possibility that there may have been strong Jansenist influences in St Vincent's community, in its beginnings and in its history. I even dare to ask what saved St Vincent himself from going the way of Jansenism. I wonder whether his rejection of Jansenism was motivated more by his fear of the chaos that would accompany a new heresy than by a lack of sympathy with at least some of Jansen's positions.

It is easy to think of Jansenism in an abstract way. Cornelius Jansen was a man, not an '-ism'. He was a single-minded, searching teacher who became convinced that theological thinking was losing its edge, especially in what concerned crucial questions about grace, free will, sin and divine judgement. As time went on, he hardened in his positions. In Jansen's time, these positions concerned a number of well-defined questions. In later generations, it became easy to label as 'Jansenist' some attitudes that go back a long time before Jansen or that came into existence independently after his time. Often a statement that is easily dubbed Jansenist could be matched or well out-matched by texts from orthodox Christian teaching, from the scriptures, from the mouth of the Lord himself. This is particularly true of some well-known warnings about divine judgement. But, for the purpose of these reflections, there is, I think, such a thing as the Jansenist mindset. It differs from what I would call the total Christian mindset. In the New Testament, there are many hard sayings, but they are all put in context by what Jesus stated about the greatest commandment and by the full revelation that God is love, a revelation that is somehow marginalised in the Jansenist mindset.

The Jansenist mindset easily absorbs any attitudes that express an overly bleak outlook on the human condition. There can be no denying that the teaching of Cornelius Jansen left a bleak legacy.

- It left a legacy of an unhealthy fear about one's personal salvation. This fear was rooted in serious hesitations as to whether Christ really did die for all. These hesitations resulted in an untrusting alliance between grace and free will. They generated doubts as to whether what is called sufficient grace is really sufficient. They encouraged a rather worried reading of St Augustine's teaching on grace and predestination. In this whole setting of fear, of uncertainty, of doubt, of worry, lies the core of the Jansenist mindset.
- It left a legacy of a joyless and dark view of human nature.
- It left a legacy of a feeling of unworthiness before the God who is all-holy and who is also a severe and judging God, slow to forgive. The feeling of unworthiness was expressed in stringent laws about

receiving Holy Communion which was seen more as a reward for the virtuous than as food for weak pilgrims. In effect, this eucharistic starvation was to encourage the piling up of merits as one prepared for judgement. Related to this came a proliferation of devotions, indulgences, sodalities, and pilgrimages. All contributed an extra coin into one's personal savings account.

- It left a legacy of inflexibility in the interpretation of Church laws. Whatever sounded like laxity was bad news. Rigourism, not flexibility, was the order of the day.

In assessing where you stand before the Jansenist mindset, a test is how you react to three questions. Do you prefer to talk about original sin or about what the controversial Matthew Fox calls original blessing? How do you react to the title of Cardinal von Balthasar's book *Dare we hope that all will be saved?* Do you read the Letter to the Romans in the perspective of God's anger and the wages of sin or as an invitation to be saved by confessing with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised him from the dead?

Almost every aspect of the Jansenist legacy touched Thérèse in some way, either in her upbringing, or in her formation as a Carmelite, or in both. In coping with each of these, she succeeded in letting the warmth of the love of Jesus her Lord into the innermost recesses of her own psyche that was both strong and fragile. Not without experiencing much pain and scruples, she shaped a spirituality of love that is distinctively her own. Against the tide of much popular piety, she wished to go to God not laden down with merits but empty-handed. In her offering to merciful love, she wished to be a willing victim of the same love and to allow God to draw her every thought, word and deed into the vortex of that love. With her keen sense of the communion of saints and the power of intercession, she didn't wish to put the fruits of these into her personal savings account. Rather she wished to empty them into God's treasury, for the love of others.

Our Jansenist bits and pieces

We know of the big moments of conversion in St Vincent's life. I don't think any one of them could be called a direct conversion towards God's love. All were conversions towards a sharp focusing on the basic questions raised by Jansen. For Vincent this involved a keen awareness of his own need of salvation and of his call to be an agent for the salvation of others. It is this awareness that led him to a deepening awareness of the love of God. We know how impressed he was by "the blessed bishop of Geneva". It would be easy to forget that the blessed bishop had endured years of personal agony about the questions raised by John Calvin

whose teaching had many affinities with that of Cornelius Jansen. Out of that agony came his *Treatise on the Love of God* and his *Introduction to the Devout Life.* Maybe it was the spirit of these that helped save Vincent from becoming himself a Jansenist. The questions that were important for Jansen became very important for Vincent too and they remained very important. In dealing with them in the spirit of Francis de Sales, he gradually found the God of love. Maybe it was in his directing of St Louise, in her more fragile days, and in the mutual enrichment that ensued, that he managed to make his own harmonising of God's justice and the mercy of God that he himself had so much experienced. In all of this he had to battle with his own nature that could hardly be called optimistic. It was sweetened by the honey of the bishop of Geneva and by the maternal instincts of Louise. In her early years, Louise had made paintings of the risen Christ and of the heart of Christ. Pascal, the one-time Jansenist, said that the heart has its reasons that the mind doesn't know. I wonder were he and Louise talking about the same heart.

The Irish Vincentian venture received approval from a Paris in which Jansenism was anything but dead. But I think we would like to believe that we escaped the influence of Jansenism. In our charism statements a few decades ago, we gave the central place to compassion and we believed that, in the Vincentian world, it had always and everywhere held this place. In our parish missions, we have always been happy and even secretly proud that, unlike the Redemptorists who preached hellfire and damnation, Vincentians had always given people very generous hopes of salvation.

When I boasted about this to a Redemptorist friend a few years ago, he gleefully drew my attention to the new life of St Alphonsus by the distinguished Irish Redemptorist, Fr Freddie Jones. It was a Vincentian priest in Naples who really put the fear of God into the young and impressionable Alphonsus. This priest used to instil terror into his listeners by darkening the Church, extinguishing the lights and speaking of the young local nobleman who, a short number of years earlier, was praying before the crucifix for his young lover who had died unrepentant from her sinful ways. As was his wont, the Vincentian preacher put that same crucifix before the eyes of Alphonsus and those of his fellow retreatants. He focused the light on the imprint of the girl's two hands burnt into the cloth surrounding the figure on the cross. Quite clearly the count's prayer was too late. To use the language of Dante's *Inferno,* all hope was to be abandoned. The result of this experience left Alphonsus psychologically scarred. The Vincentian was using a preaching style that existed long before Jansen. Jansen's teaching had given it a new shot of life.

In my Vincentian formation

As I look back on my own spiritual journey, I can find some traces of each ingredient of the Jansenist mindset. Would I attribute any of these to my Vincentian formation? I believe that my generation, at least, were fortunate in our initiation into Vincentian life. In his role as superior and teacher of moral theology, Fr Tom Donovan instilled a sanity that helped us to take any bleak approaches to life in our stride. We were blessed in our director, Fr James Cahalan, who had absorbed a good deal of post-Jansenist French spiritual writing and who kept a watchful eye on the kind of reading done by those of scrupulous or tender conscience. In our first years in Glenart, our director was Fr Joe Cullen, a man whom we learned to imitate in a variety of ways. Was it some lingering influence from Jansenism in his subconscious that made him weigh a sample egg and a sample slice of bread before the Lenten fast and to assure us that we were not going outside the bounds of the law? He talked of piling up merits in a way that would make St Thérèse squirm. But his own daily living of the Gospel was gloriously human. His foundational images of heaven started with a cup of tea, a game of cards or of golf and, above all, a holiday in Bettystown.

As regards our first introduction to St Thérèse, which of us could forget the influence of our second superior at St Joseph's, Fr Johnny O'Connell? In all his conferences and repetitions of prayer, he talked of "the little girl of twenty-four" and he invited us to make sure to stay on the right bus for life's journey. In the student body, the two great devotees of Thérèse were Pat Quinn, who said that he owed his own vocation to reading the story of the little white flower, and Frank Maher, whose devout parents donated a statue of Thérèse to Glenart. Would I be very arrogant if I suggested that it was Thérèse who mellowed the more rigorous aspects of the characters of these two much-loved confreres? I dare to ask the question as I recall a conference given by Fr Paddy Kelly who had his own endearing way of emphasising a point. Thérèse's way, he said, is simple but not easy; it is worth following because she has the gift of softening what is hard in our characters.

Our formators taught us not to take too seriously the Jansenist patches that turned up in our formulary of prayer and in our retreat practices. We weren't too frightened by the words we heard at the end of every day: "What shall become of us, 0 God, if we are obliged to appear this night before the tribunal of thy justice?; we have deserved hell, our whole life has been a continual series of ingratitude and sin". We fled to God's mercy as a kind of last resort, "our only refuge". James Cahalan taught us not to take too seriously the umpteen bylaws in the *Regulae Seminarii Interni,* a section of which each of us had to transcribe every

day. I don't think any of us felt the need to be exorcised of the many wrong spirits that, according to the *Regulae,* could take hold of a group of seminarists. The year I was ordained, I was dispensed from four days of the community retreat in All Hallows. Lucky me, I discovered. The daily pattern of the retreat was even more rigorous than what I had been used to. Nearly every hour, there was a call to a community exercise. Fr John K Murphy took me aside one day and, with a twinkle in his eye, said the daily programme had been designed to keep the confreres out of mischief.

The shaping of our province

Over the years, confreres of other vintages have told me that their formation was more tinged with Jansenism than mine. They said this without rancour. I have heard many stories of confreres, especially superiors, who showed something of Jansenist rigour, but each story had its flashes of humour and humanity. It was told of one rigorous superior that, if a confrere didn't turn up for morning prayer, he would go to the delinquent's room and stand at the door, knocking. To one recalcitrant confrere he said "Father, I weep for your immortal soul". "Ah weep for yourself, you old humbug" was the retort. The blend of rigour and humanity in the placing of confreres is illustrated in Joseph O'Connor's delightful book *Hostage to Fortune.* When Joseph began to doubt his vocation after a time in Maynooth, he went to the austere Fr Carpenter, only to be told to go home and go quickly: "Young man, you should never have come here ... you should go your ways from here. The floor of hell is paved with the skulls of bad priests". Joseph was not quite ready for such a peremptory dismissal. A fellow student told him that before he took a further step he should talk to the other Vincentian director, "Johnny" Myers. Johnny received him with eccentric warmth and, over a period of some months, gave him space to come himself to the conclusion that Fr Carpenter had sprung on him.

It is not easy to name the sources of the Jansenist tinges in our province. In this regard, we were largely untouched by the influence of Fr Edward Ferris, CM, the first dean and first professor of moral theology in Maynooth. It is hard to evaluate the extent to which he gave a Jansenist tone to the Maynooth from which we were to spring. He has been variously described as good, holy, austere, rigorous, and rigid. In the teaching of moral theology, he and his immediate successors gave a strict teaching about human behaviour, but this seems to have been done in a way that had become quite detached from the core Jansenist teaching on grace, salvation, sin and free will. Most of the concern of the vigilant Roman authorities was less about Maynooth's teaching on

these than on the college's positions on such topics as Gallicanism and ultra-montanism. It is in this setting that the men of Usher's Quay learned their theology. Though they had a good relationship with the Paris in which Fr Etienne's re-founding was taking shape, they kept a healthy independence in assessing what was primary and what was secondary in rules old and new. And still it would be impossible for them not to be touched by the Jansenist attitudes that had been showing in various ways in Paris and Maynooth.

Sons and Daughters

The Daughters of Charity in Ireland had their beginnings in a French setting that was anything but free of Jansenist influences. These influences continued. Many of the Daughters say quite openly that up to recently their way of life was characterised by a multiplication of prayers and spiritual exercises, many of which had a bleak Jansenist colouring. Few, I think, would deny that the formation in Mill Hill and Dunardagh was rigorous. An observer of the pattern of their religious practices and discipline would not immediately guess that they were "Daughters of God's Love". In their many prayers, there seemed to be more emphasis on a desire for purity in all its forms than on charity.

And still! And still! Did it really do the Daughters any harm? Those of them who were shaped and formed in an undoubtedly rigorous system and who are now in their autumn or post-autumn years are brimful of the qualities of the covenant, mercy and fidelity. One is being continually surprised by joy in discovering hearts that are ever kind and true. In spite of all her severity with herself, Louise was drawing images of Christ's heart fifty years before the experiences of St Margaret Mary.

Even at the times of most cluttering up of laws and by-laws, of prayers and by-prayers, her spiritual Daughters never lost contact with that heart. I am sure that, in the continuing search for renewal, they would like, in the words of St. Thérèse, to "take Jesus by the heart".

Re-founding again

There is a sense in which every community of consecrated life has been founded once-for-all. There is another sense in which it has to be continually re-founded by experiencing daily conversion. The years since the Second Vatican Council have been a time of the shaking of many foundations in ways that now present choices between re-founding and extinction. Many members of many communities seem convinced that extinction is inevitable. I like to see the announcement that Thérèse is a doctor of the Church and the journey of her relics through Ireland as one of many new invitations to re-found and to await nothing less than the

miraculous breathing of God on our dry bones.

What stage of re-founding have we reached in our province? As a community, we have completely outgrown the whole of the core teaching of Jansenism and all the austerity, rigour and rigidity that flowed from it. And so my question: in the process, have we become poorer rather than richer? I believe that all of us, at least those of my generation, were, in our decision to follow the Vincentian way of life, healthily influenced by the questions about salvation, sin and grace that Jansen taught and wrote about. These questions were very important in the "conversions" of St Vincent and in the shaping of his teaching and spirituality. They were still very much alive during my formation years. It is in this context that I would dare to speak of the benefits of Jansenism in St Vincent's life and in the Vincentian tradition. By now, I believe, we have largely by-passed not just Jansen's answers but the questions themselves. But the questions are still valid and necessary. Facing them helps us cope with the great tensions in Christian life. In practice, I think we tend to pass them by. This, I fear, has contributed to our impoverishment. I, for one, in making my Vincentian decision, was concerned about my personal salvation, in the context of a salutary fear of the Lord. I had no illusion about the weakness of human nature and the need of repentance. I recognised the need of a rule of life that would help keep me on the straight and narrow. I like to believe that each of these was a good starting point for my discovery that God is love. I sometimes wonder whether, having outgrown any fear of a harsh and judging God, we may have forgotten that there is a fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom. We can get drawn into today's fashionable attitude in which von Balthasar's tentative hope is presented as if it were a doctrinal certitude.

At the risk of sounding restorationist, I find myself asking a few questions. Have we done too much dumping? Have we thrown out more than the Jansenist bathwater? There has been a stripping not so much of our altars as of our prayers at our altars. We could hardly be called iconoclasts but have we been putting our images to best use? At a time when we need more and more time to reflect and pray together, we have watered down the ideal of a daily hour of prayer in common. We have rid our retreats of all cumbersome exercises but we have moved far away from the annual retreat, for eight days, in common. How many of our local communities have succeeded in devising a daily celebration of the Prayer of the Church that is beautiful and uplifting?

In a word, we have done a lot of emptying. Emptying is a great Christian word. The Lord's own self-emptying provides the signature-tune for Holy Week (Phil. 2: 7). But no Christian emptying should leave

a vacuum. It should leave us ready to be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3: 19). I often wonder why, in my daily Vincentian living, I find myself so emptied that there is little built-in reminder of the fact that I am vowed to follow the poor Christ bringing good news to the poor.

The age of love

From all sides today, we are being told of God's unconditional love. Popes have been inviting us to be builders of a civilisation of love. None of us would reject Thérèse's great ideal of being love in the heart of the Church. In this atmosphere, one would be entitled to expect that by now there would be new energies in ordained ministry, that older communities of consecrated life would be rejuvenated by the perspective of love, and that new communities of love would be blossoming. One is entitled to wonder what has gone wrong since the days when the motivation for vows or other forms of religious commitment was more strongly coloured by ensuring one's own salvation. More tentatively, one is entitled to wonder to what extent is the growth in adult religious education programmes a new explosion of love.

As things stand, the call to be communities of love tends to be rather bland, content-free. The response, too often, is a yawn. Our preaching about God's unconditional love needs a continual sharpening, a continual focus. Without this focusing, one could be caught up in the atmosphere of vague goodwill that, in the words of a popular poem, led Jesus himself to crouch against a wall and cry for Calvary. The importance of exact focusing is well illustrated in the life of Thérèse.

In being a lover and in inviting others to be lovers, she said she wanted to love Jesus with a passion and to give him a thousand proofs of her love. The daily thousand proofs were focused on a particular community, towards a particular prioress, towards particular sisters, in the performance of particular religious and other exercises. For St Vincent, the indicators of true love were the tired arm and the sweaty brow.

The focus of our life of love has traditionally been expressed in the three vows and in our Vincentian vow of stability. All four have been getting a battering. Like so many other communities, we are anything but poor; indeed we sometimes find ourselves with an embarrassment of riches. Celibate chastity or its absence has been at the heart of many recent scandals. Its theoretical foundations have been questioned. We have abandoned or watered down much of the older language of obedience. Stability in the service of the poor has been the subject of much revisionism. We need new magnets to draw us to a radical following of

the Jesus of the Gospels and to be startled by his call. I am not at all suggesting that our traditional vows have had their day. But I do believe that, in spite of all our efforts at renewal, the witness we give is often the opposite of what we have vowed. I sometimes have an ambition to compose a new litany of the Holy Name. It would, I think, include invoking Jesus in the six ways in which he is called marginal in John Meier's "A Marginal Jew". It would invoke Jesus as the one whose zeal for the reign of his Father made his relatives think he was mad. It would include a saying yes to Jesus as he calls us to carry no bag.

Keep translating the relics

The dream that follows from my question is that, in the aftermath of the coming of Thérèse's relics, we would experience a new miracle in which our drying Vincentian bones would get new flesh. In my formation days, in Blackrock especially, the feasts of St Vincent meant a lot to us. On July 19th we went from Castleknock to Phibsboro to sing the Mass, from *Pauperes Sion saturabo panibus; sacerdotes eius induam salutari* to the recessional *Quis novus coelis.* Later in the year, we, in the words of the formulary, gathered in spirit at the deathbed of St Vincent. On January 25th, we gave a kind of honorary membership to the local priests with whom we felt we had a special affinity.

The only feast of St Vincent that was not life-giving for me was that of the translation of the relics. I could find nothing uplifting about the bones of a dead saint. Having celebrated the feast for over fifty times, I discovered it for the first time in the year of St Thérèse. I was blessed by the fact that I was celebrating the Mass with a community of Daughters of Charity. I couldn't help remembering that it was a young Daughter of Charity who best interpreted what was happening when the relics of St Vincent were being brought in triumph through the streets of Paris. Catherine Labouré was one of a hundred and twelve novices from the Rue du Bac who were part of the journey of the relics. We all know of the visions that Catherine experienced later that year. I venture to say that these were less important than the one she had on the occasion of the translation and the one that took place between then and the vision of the medal. Certainly it is the first two that best interpret the third.

I have an open mind as to the nature of Catherine's visions. The Church affords us very wide space in the interpretation of all private revelations. Were Catherine's visions about her own dream as to how things should be or did God give her an extraordinary showing of his own vision and dream? To use the language of the books, were the visions corporal or imaginative or intellectual? The question is interesting but it could lead us to a dead end. Certainly, as with all apparitions

and visions, we are dealing with the colourings of the mind and imagination of a woman with a particular education, at a particular time and place, at a particular moment in history. Every aspect of all Catherine's visions was time-conditioned and limited. Their when, how, where and by whom, were their strength rather than their weakness. The good news of Jesus Christ is always for now. The expressing in human lives of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is the only criterion for the authenticity of any vision or apparition. The fact that Catherine's visions were for a particular now doesn't mean that they were for 1830 only. They have a remarkable topicality but they must be translated into 2002. In the process, we all become visionaries.

Three visions

In his life of Catherine, René Laurentin gives a fine account of Catherine's three sets of visions. The first vision or set of visions was of the heart of St Vincent which manifested itself in three colours, white, red and black-red. However we interpret the details of the colours, the vision was of a heart fully in touch with human experience, with all its colours, of joy, sorrow and glory.

The second vision or set of visions was of Christ as king, in touch with all the joys and sufferings of his body the Church, which had been experiencing a new martyrdom. It is the Lord's identification with the sufferings of his Church that accounts for the change of colour in the visions which were primarily Eucharistic.

The story of Catherine's visions in July and November 1830 doesn't need to be re-told. As I re-read the familiar account in the light of the journeys of St Vincent's relics and of Thérèse's relics, I was convinced that all the visions must be seen as one. Somehow the symbols in the medal capture them all. The fact that it is the people who named the medal 'miraculous' is significant. Their experience brought them right into the atmosphere of the Gospel. It put them in direct touch with the desires of the heart of St Vincent and with the heart of Christ who expended all his energies in proclaiming the good news that God is king. In the miracles of Jesus, especially those that were directly miracles of compassion, the people of his day saw, touched and tasted the kingdom of God. The miracles were the great expression of the "mission statement" of Jesus: the Spirit of the Lord anointing him to bring good news to the poor (Lk 4).

This mission statement of Jesus is the great backdrop for expressing the charisms of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity. The woman of the 'Miraculous Medal' is none other than the mother of Jesus who, in recognising a human need, invited her Son to

perform his first sign, his first miracle. She keeps facilitating the flow of life that unites all the hearts that are continually resourced from the loving kindness of the heart of our God.

A new lease of life?

My reflections on Catherine's three visions, or rather on her one great vision, have led me to a new desire that the confreres and Daughters would find new ways of celebrating the full message of the medal of the miracles, the medal of Gospel compassion. My desire comes at a time when many would think that this kind of devotion is far too flimsy a thread on which to hang a serious spirituality or pastoral programme. It comes at a time when many, I think, would like to stow the medal away as part of the heritage of a nineteenth century credulous people. But it also comes at a time when people are designing all kinds of new medals and are eager to explore the inner workings of the sun and of the other stars and of our connections with them. It comes at a time when we are entering into a Europe that has taken the symbol of the twelve stars directly from the miraculous medal. It comes at a time when the word miracle is an in-word, in both secular and religious usage. It comes at a time when we are discovering a lot about the resources of the human heart.

I would like to see the medal celebrated not as a pious, peripheral devotion but in a way that would bring us into full touch with the heart of the Lord, with the heart of the man who is patron of all charitable societies, with the heart of the woman who is patron of all social workers. I would like to see it celebrated in a way that would put us in touch with the pure and interceding heart of the mother of the Church, for a world that's in a sin-mess. The medal of the miracles, well celebrated, should provide continually new visions of the kingdom of God as experienced in the ministry of Jesus: blind people seeing, lame people walking ... the poor having the good news preached to them. It was in a series of miracles of compassion that Jesus touched and cured a leper, fed hungry crowds, restored to life the only son of a widow, cured the blind Bartimaeus, healed in some way all who were sick, and enlisted disciples who would do similar healing.

The Gospel miracles of Jesus were the daily manifestation by Jesus of the divine mercy of which we have been hearing so much recently. St Luke's Gospel, with its compassionate mission statement of Jesus, has been called the Gospel for Vincentians. I like to think of Mark's Gospel as the one that relates the compassionate miracles of Jesus with the Paschal Mystery of his dying and rising.

The first chapters in Mark are full of the Galilee miracles. The

second half of the Gospel, following on the account of the Transfiguration, prepares the disciples for the bitter cup at Jerusalem. Galilee interprets Jerusalem; Jerusalem interprets Galilee.

The miracles of compassion interpret the Paschal Mystery; the Paschal Mystery interprets the miracles. One doesn't make Christian sense without the other.

New ways

I admire those who composed our present miraculous medal novena prayers and I respect those who pray them week after week. Long may their faith and devotion last. But I think the time has come to do new exploring into the Gospel of compassion that is encapsulated in the medal and to find entirely new ways of expressing it. I think it is very significant that the figure of the evangelising Christ in the seal of the Congregation of the Mission contributed to the shaping of the figure of Mary in the 'Miraculous Medal'.

- I dream of a group of Vincentian men and women doing a new and creative composing around the message of the medal, putting new flesh on what so often has become dry bones.
- I dream of the new compositions as mirroring all the mission statements of all the Vincentian family.
- I dream of celebrations of the medal that will draw us to St Vincent's heart and to all the hearts, in heaven and on earth, with which he was in communion.
- I dream of celebrations that, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, will make us experience Mary not as somebody close to the Church but as the woman active at the heart of the Church's life, the woman of faith, the model of the Church, the perfect disciple. This would be our distinctive contribution to a newly-emerging Marian theology and Marian devotion.
- I dream of new injections into our preaching about the Gospel miracles of compassion that are opened up for us in the hearts on the medal but that, strangely, do not find a place in the decades of the Rosary.
- I pray that, as we keep re-discovering the message of the heart of St Vincent, of the heart of the mother of the Lord and the heart of the Lord himself, we may become communities of love in the heart of the Church. It is one of the ways we can become agents of the new miracles for which the prioress of Lisieux prayed. In the words of the communion antiphon, in the old Mass of the 'Miraculous Medal', may God "give us signs again, work further wonders" (Eccles. 36: 5).

Helped by Thérèse

I am placing my question and my dream in the hands of the new doctor of the Church. As we join ourselves to her offering to merciful love, she can help us find new life in our rather tired vows and in the practice of the very virtues we regard as characteristically our own. The language of simplicity, humility and charity which captures the spirit of the Daughters of Charity was very dear to Thérèse. Her style of dealing with others, especially those we might describe as dysfunctional, was meekness itself. She would encourage us in seeing that meekness is the only antidote to the various forms of violence with which Christians have made compromises over the centuries. She would encourage us to practise mortification by allowing ourselves to be continually purified in what she loved to call the crucible of suffering, which in our day largely takes the form of a Church that is being continually humiliated by the sins of those especially consecrated to its service. In motivating us to have a renewed zeal for souls, she reminds us of the amazing way God fulfilled her own desire to bring the Gospel to every land.

The spirituality of Thérèse is not a rival to or a distraction from our Vincentian spirituality. Her little way and her offering to merciful love provide a setting and perspective for any authentic spirituality. They are a continual stimulus to find holiness in the ordinary. They anticipated the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that, in the new creation in the world to come, we will eventually find the fruits of all our enterprise, illuminated and transformed.

As we search for new ways of living by the word of God and breaking it for others, Thérèse invites us to subject all our inherited spirituality to the one spirituality of being love in the heart of the Church, to subject all our books of rules and constitutions to the one book that uniquely expresses the word of God and from one line of which Thérèse often got more nourishment than she did from many books.

As we reflect on how most of the people of Ireland got new life by venerating some of the dry bones of Thérèse, she invites us to let our own drying bones live and to keep inserting ourselves into her beloved communion of saints and into the great communion of Father, Son and Spirit.

St Paul's 1950-2000

Frank Mullan CM

Fr Tom Lucey, a noted St Patrick's Kiltegan educationalist in the Diocese of Calabar Nigeria, used to say to me that he often wondered how on earth the relatively small Irish Province could possibly administer and staff that formidable list of educational institutions: Castleknock, St Patrick's Drumcondra, St Patrick's Armagh and Strawberry Hill, not to mention the two major Seminaries, All Hallows and the Irish College, Paris.

How come, then, that in 1950 we proceeded to add to such a list of commitments by launching out once again and founding the new College of St Paul's? The salient point, I believe, is that it *was* 1950, ie, a period closer in time to the Boer War than to the present day. Life was different then, and in Ireland at least much simpler, and the Irish Province was a nice place to be. Not exactly awash with vocations, but always a steady stream from Castleknock, St Pat's Armagh, Cork and Phibsboro, with the odd blow-in from elsewhere... Halcyon days indeed. God was in His heaven...shades of Alice Taylor's nostalgia for a vanished Ireland!

The Province may not have been exactly xenophobic, but we did share in the current national insularity. Practically all contact with the mainland European Provinces had come to an end with the outbreak of war. Our theological students no longer went to Dax, and more's the pity, the custom was never revived, with, I believe, lasting harm to our Province, its beliefs, practice and works.

At the same time we were never in a completely static situation. In the late Forties, things began to stir, small enough, but significant, just the same. For example, when numbers in St Joseph's Blackrock soared to the dizzy heights of forty-eight, we began to hear rumours of an impending swarm from the parent hive. There being at the time very few moles in the Vincentian authoritarian structure, anything that we, as students, gleaned was necessarily minimal. The names of Benburb, and later Glenart, were declassified and released into the public domain and duly became the staple diet for student speculation.

It became a time when wider horizons beckoned. Foreign Missions came into view again, especially with Fr Maurice Kavanagh's return home after lengthy imprisonment in China. Tom Devine edited the first edition of a new student journal "Evangelizare", and was instrumental in inviting men like the Dutch confrere, Fr Boonekampf, into the students' hall to regale us with stories from exotic places like Surabaya

in Indonesia. Students began exchanging letters with their peers in the English speaking provinces and beyond. Then to cap it all, the spectacle of Kevin O'Hagan being dispatched to Japan!

Was it, then, all this heady mix that caused the Province, already overstretched as it was, to launch out and found the new College of St Paul's? Well, not quite. The real instigation came from Archbishop John Charles McQuaid rather than from any particular perceived sign of the times. Belonging as he did to the "Don't ask them, tell them" episcopal school of thought he 'leaned' on the Provincial, Fr James O'Doherty, and Council and that was that! Nothing sinister about it at all. John Charles would not himself have been conscious of an overly dictatorial approach in the matter.

Footnote: A slight digression:
Interesting to compare the above with a similar request from Bishop Philbin of Down & Connor in the sixties for the Vins to staff a proposed new Secondary school in Belfast – the present Our Lady & St Patrick's. When turned down by James Cahalan the Bishop never spoke to him again; though he faithfully sent me a Christmas card every year, until he finally discovered that he was confusing me with my brother!

In Dublin Diocese
The general assumption at the time was that education should be in the hands of clergy and religious. In a fast expanding Diocese then there was an urgent need – new colleges, hospitals, etc. That was *the* sign of the times for the Archbishop – and who can blame him? He obviously recognised the educational skills and commitment in the places he knew so well: Castleknock and St Patrick's Drumcondra. Difficult for us now to realise that in the early Fifties the total number of secondary students in the country was about 47,000. (Now it's more like 470,000). Nothing in the air yet about free secondary education, and certainly not much in the way of socio-educational analysis the notion of Social Justice had been pretty well relegated to the small print in the old Moral Theology manuals, so it wasn't seen to impinge on the educational sphere...

Example:
In 1950, a few hundred yards from Sybil Hill, there already was a private lay-run secondary school, Kostka College by name. Little or no account seems to have been taken, by us or by the Archbishop, of its existence or, more importantly, of its future, in the event of a Vincentian College being set up. In that case no doubt what the local parents would do...and duly did. Kostka went to the wall.

Gonzaga, the Jesuit College, was set up in Ranelagh at the very same time as St Paul's, ie September 1950. Lots of similarities between the two – but Gonzaga definitely more elite. No mention of Gonzaga is complete without the mention of Fr Diarmuid Moran, founding father of St Paul's. He had an absorbing interest in Gonzaga and in all its works and pomps...especially in its fees! When the new St Paul's was being built, it came to pass that our architect enrolled his son in Gonzaga – and became for Diarmuid a veritable *deus ex machina* – delivering all the desired information... fees and details of the proposed new school uniform. His cup of joy was full when the St Paul's under-elevens beat their Gonzaga counterparts in the Schools' first Rugby encounter.

And so in an era relatively free from discussion on social issues, St Paul's came to birth – another College run by clergy, with students drawn from solidly middle class families.

In later times the CORI Justice Commission was to delve into some allegedly murky areas, eg, the continued involvement of clergy and religious in fee-paying schools at a time when the State had introduced free Secondary Education for all; also matters like Government funding of teachers' incremental salaries, even in the schools that had opted out of the Government scheme and remained fee-paying. I remember the Jesuit representative on the CORI Justice Commission telling us that the Order was currently examining where it stood on several socio-educational issues. Some of the Jesuit schools, he said, were to be "favoured"; others maintained for the present, but at least one – no prizes for guessing which – was to be treated, as they say in spy stories, "with extreme prejudice".

It would seem that the approach to the founding of St Paul's was a severely practical one. The big question, perhaps the only one, was how could the Province proceed to expand still further in the educational sphere with all that this would entail in the way of manpower for years to come, and still develop all the other works?

Be all that as it may, when the new College of St Paul's did get under way, it proved to be an exhilarating experience for all concerned. The College was opened in September 1950, staffed by Frs Diarmuid Moran, Kevin O'Hanrahan, Frank McMorrow and myself, to be joined later that year by the redoubtable Fr Joe Lavery from Lanark, presumably to add some *gravitas* to the young community. Fourteen more confreres were to serve on the staff during the first decade. Under Diarmuid Moran's benign sway, these were days marked by great eagerness and enthusiasm and general youthful exuberance. "Happy few...band of brothers"; after all, we were a collection of not Thirty-Somethings, but Twenty-Somethings!

My memories of the Fifties are of a dedicated staff, Vincentian and lay, and a great bonding with the boys, vitality in all school departments...the thrill of a 100 per cent pass rate in our first Intermediate Examination, winning our first ever Junior Cup match down in Castle Avenue and narrowly losing to Belvedere in the 1960 Junior Cup Final in Lansdowne Road (entirely due, need I say, to the referee's palpably wrong decision!). On a book awarded as a class prize, I remember writing a line from Virgil: "*Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*...who knows but that in times to come it will be a joy to recall these days." And so it has proved to be.

May the oft-quoted words of Archbishop Romero be true of all who have taught, or still teach, in St Paul's and in all our Vincentian Colleges:

> We plant seeds that will one day grow
> we water seeds already planted
> knowing that they hold future promise.

Vice-Province of Ss Cyril and Methodius.

Paul Roche CM

Living at the cross-roads

At the start of his recent visit, the Pope said: *"In the very name Ukraine, there is a reminder of the greatness of your country which, with its history, bears witness to its unique vocation as the frontier and gate between East and West. Down the centuries that country has been the privileged cross-roads of different cultures, the meeting place of the spiritual treasures of East and West"*. While most towns begin at a cross-roads, this is not always a peaceful or safe place to live. Powerful people on either side do not always consider the welfare of those living at the cross-roads.

Someone much younger than my late father, living in what is now Western Ukraine, could well have been born a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (long since defunct). By schooling age, he would have found himself in the newly created Czechoslovakia (since defunct). Most of his adult life was lived in the USSR (also consigned to history), and now as a pensioner he is a citizen of the ten-year-old Republic of Ukraine. Very likely over his long lifetime, he was forced to live in several successive houses as each was destroyed in turn, yet living on the same patch of land he has amassed an interesting collection of passports and imposed identities. The same story could be told in several parts of our new vice-province. To tell this story back, not over a single lifetime but for a thousand years, and the weave of languages, cultures, religions, armies and traders make a rich if heavy cloak to wear.

Five Vincentian presences.

Our new Vice-Province is an amalgam of five separate missions mainly begun when the opportunity presented itself with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Each of these missions operated effectively and without contact with the others. The Polish Province began its mission in Belarus in 1991 – or, more correctly, they continued their work there which had been pulled down under the Soviet regime. We had our martyrs there, notably the much loved Fr Michael Boronovski who spent eight years in the Gulag, and whom I met briefly in 1993. His grave in Grodno, even in February, was decked with flowers and lights. There are six confreres of the Polish Province working in Belarus under the leadership of Edward Lojek.

The Polish Province also undertook a mission in Bukovina – a territory which straddles the border between Ukraine and Roumania. From the centre in Storozyniec, the confreres look after fifteen Churches and Mass stations, as well as a number of social projects. This is a thriving mission and there have been several vocations to the Congregation, one of whom was ordained in May of this year. The majority of the Catholics are Polish speaking. However there are a variety of languages spoken in the area – one little girl, with whom I spoke in a house where we were having Sunday Mass, spoke Ukranian, Polish, Russian, Roumanian – even though she was scarcely old enough for school!

Not very distant from Storozyniec – but separated by the Carpathian Mountains – is the third previously existing mission. This has been the initiative of the Slovakian Province and is centred in the town of Perecin. This area, Zakarpata, borders with Hungary and is the home of many Greek Catholics. Indeed two of our newly-ordained Confreres from this area are from Greek Catholic families and can celebrate Mass in both Latin and Greek rites.

Each of these Missions is in a tradition of pastoral care – which predates the present political landscape. The changed circumstances, dating from 1991, enabled the confreres to resume the care of their people.

International Missions.

Unlike the missions described above, the two International Missions have a very different origin. They arise directly out of the initiative of the present Superior General, Fr Bob Maloney, to respond to calls for new involvement all round the world, with international teams of missioners. The first of these was set up in the city of Kharkiv, in Eastern Ukraine in 1995. The team there has been a mixture of Slovakian and Polish confreres, and the leader has been Fr. Jaroslav Jasso. Kharkiv is a big city, most notable for its heavy industry. It was the capital of Ukraine during the Soviet era. It has a population of something over 2 million, only a small fraction of whom are Catholics. In the main these Catholics would be the families of those who were sent to such industrial centres by Stalin during World War II and later. They have known very little pastoral care during their lives, and basically nurtured the faith without the assistance of priests. When the confreres went there in 1995 they acquired an abandoned children's home. At first it was used as a community house and a place of worship. However gradually a community house was built, then a magnificent social centre, which will cater for the teeming local population irrespective of religion (or none) and at present they are preparing to dedicate a beautiful newly

built church. I was really surprised and delighted to meet the lively African (mainly Nigerian) community which gathers there, some of whose members arrived in Kharkiv as they read of the 'need for missioners in Russia'!

Our most Easterly Mission is in the Ural region of Western Siberia, which territory is partly in Europe and partly in Asia. (It is a nice feeling to really have a Siberia to which someone can be sent if not quite fitting in elsewhere!). I have only been there on visits twice during the winter – it takes mental as well as physical strength to make your home there.

Nijnzi Tagil – home of the Soviet tank and artillery industry, is also our home. They used to say that such was the pollution from the big mechanical works that they had black snow. With the relative decline of the arms industry I can say that for the past couple of years the snow – lots of it – has been white. However, that same decline in the arms industry has resulted in a lot of poverty and problems for many of the 400,000 inhabitants. A new phenomenon – sadly not just in Nijzni Tagil – is the alarming increase of street children – or, rather, under-the-street children. They live in the relative warmth of the passages under the streets which take the pipes transferring the hot water to the high rise blocks of flats. Minus 50°C on the street; rats and dirt with warmth below the street. Your choice!

This international Mission was begun by Fr Maloney in 1997, and has been staffed by Slovenian and Polish Confreres. They are working with the Slovakian Daughters of Charity and have opened a second base in Severouralsk – which is literally the end of the rail-line going north from there. The people are mainly those sent by Stalin to open the Aluminium mines and works of the region.

Put it all together – what do you get?

In October 2000, the decision was taken, at a meeting involving the three Provincials and the Superiors of the various missions, to unite everything into a single administrative unit – a new Vice-province with its centre in the ancient city of Kiev. The Catholic Church will never be a majority religion in the total region, though hopefully we may see the day when East and West will respect one another's orthodoxy and a new Sobor, a 'Koinonia' may re-emerge, and these distinctions be consigned to history with so many failed political entities.

Soon after he arrived in Kiev, Pope John Paul II said "*as a pilgrim of peace and brotherhood, I am sure that I shall be welcomed with friendship also by those who, although they are not Catholics, have hearts open to dialogue and co-operation. I wish to assure them I have not come here with the intention of proselytising, but to bear witness to*

Christ…." Then, in perhaps the most moving words he spoke during his five days here, he added – *"unfortunately there have been sad times, when the image of Christ's love has been obscured: bowing down before our one Lord, let us recognise our faults. As we ask forgiveness for the errors committed in both the distant and recent past, let us in turn offer forgiveness for the wrongs endured. The most fervent wish that rises from my heart is that the errors of times past will not be repeated in the future…".*

On a number of occasions I have thought of our Irish experience of 150 years ago – the Great Famine; a million deaths, and a further million fleeing a land that had nothing to offer. At that deadly time in our history, missioners came from across the water. They brought what we didn't have, food – food and the Bible. Tragically they linked the two. Join our church, enjoy our soup! We remember it so clearly seven generations later. The lands where we work are traumatised at present. Not just the snow has changed from black to white, everything has been turned up-side down. The welfare safety-net which the communist regime provided for the young, the elderly, handicapped and vulnerable had been removed – largely at World Bank insistence. There are terrible needs, both in the grim urban settings and among the broken rural communities. It is good that the Vincentian family is here – not with any grandiose pretence of being able to change everything, but at least to be with the people, and of course to do whatever we can to nurture hope and belief for the future.

The Future.

In some situations we might be tempted to speak confidently of the future – just as we would have it. Living on the cross-roads, that danger is very much less – there are too many currents of change about. We have decided to buy a house in Kiev, and have even chosen one. It is a new house built over a period of years by a business-man who preferred to invest any profits he had in timber and bricks rather than a paper bank. This we hope to acquire at the start of 2002, and it will become our central house; a parish base; and noviciate (we have at least three candidates, including one Nigerian). I hope it will become a place associated with care, and help, and also in time a centre from which missions and catachetical work will be undertaken. I hope that we will gradually be able to move from being all mission, to being a Province with centres as well as missions.

There are exciting prospects of helping to sustain life in the farming communities of the rich 'black-soil' lands of Western Ukraine – our confreres are involved in two "Agri-firms" which are really co-opera-

tives, arising with the end of collectivised farming in here. (Agriculture remains collectivised in both Russia and Belarus at the time of writing - and not a lot of need to hold your breath). There are huge social needs in all our centres, urban and rural, and each of our regions seems to be addressing these in their own way. Catechetical work is a tremendous need, we also live in the world of Vatican II but the people have no access to the Church's teaching, and without proselytising, we must equip ourselves and others to proclaim the word in season and out.

Finally might I say – since this is an Irish publication – just how appreciative I am of all the good wishes and support I have received; it means a great deal. Recently, I was feeling rather low when things went wrong with passport and visas, and lots of confreres cheered me up again. Thank you all very much! Let me also say that I hope that Providence is linking East and West in our Province in a way we could not have imagined. Perhaps instead of puffing along on a single tired lung, we may begin to discover again the life of breathing deeply with two lungs.

Father Thomas Fagan CM

His first arrival in Paris was the occasion of his first appointment, September 1936. There he was to remain as Dean while, at the same time, attending lectures in Philosophy at the Institut Catholique. The start of hostilities in September 1939 put an end to his (and the Community's) contact with student formation at the Irish College, Paris, after a period lasting since 1858.

Tom loved France and was always in praise of such places as Rocamadour, Carcassonne and, above all, Notre Dame in Paris. The cathedral itself was the source of his favourite exhortation to repentance; around Passion Tide, he would use the reflection by Cardinal Verdier on his own conversion – as a young tearaway, larking with an equally unlikely pal in the Cathedral on Good Friday, he was literally brought to his knees before the Calvaire in the great Church.

Since the assumption by the Hierarchy was that the Irish College would not reopen during hostilities, Tom was 'directed' to All Hallows, with what marvellous results only Providence can know. From that date in September 1939 until 1970, he was to labour, as Dean, Vice-President and, ultimately, as President, with incalculable benefit to the Irish Church of the Diaspora. On the way to or from one or other of the houses in All Hallows, he would have been confronted often with the motto of the College, which encapsulated his own priestly endeavour; "Euntes docete omnes gentes"; 'Go teach all nations'.

He would be the first to pay tribute to the influence on him of such stalwart members of the Congregation as Frs O'Donnell, Purcell and John Shanahan and also that of Pat O'Gorman. Wherever you meet an alumnus of All Hallows, Tom Fagan's name will be held aloft among those mighty examples of the priestly model.

His arrival in St Peter's would, no doubt, have been as much a surprise to himself as to the majority (and was the cause of a legendary wager on account of its unliklihood!) for no other reason than that he had not been directly engaged in parish work. His involvement in priestly formation, however, and his direct contact with so many alumni and priests, especially of Dublin Diocese, had laid a good foundation for his new sphere of activity, all the more so when he was to establish another first; Phibsboro' was to become, after so many years as a Mission House, a fully-fledged parish in the diocese in 1972. What a wonderful impetus this was for all of us who have been privileged to serve there under this added incentive!

Tommy was to remain part of the Phibsboro' community until his death; even during the two years when he was officially attached to the

Provincial House next door! His last months were passed in the loving care of Sr Carmel and the wonderful staff in Rickard House.

Providence was to add one other string to his bow. He succeeded Fr McGlynn who had been given the office of Liaison Representative for contact between the Irish Hierarchy and the Department of the French Government which dealt with the Irish College in Paris (which had, by then, become a college for Polish clerics in formation outside their own land). His office involved occasional visits to Paris and consultation as to the future of the College. I used to tease him later about this period, which coincided briefly with the regime of General DeGaulle as President of the French Republic; I suggested that, as Leo XIII had requested of his confessor (one of our confreres), so DeGaulle had insisted that Tommy, as the French say, 'tutoyer' him (use the familiar second person singular in address). Even in jest, Tom wouldn't hear of such a possibility.

To what attribute his great and varied success? He was, by his own admission, a scholar of the fourth form (but then, of course, so was St Vincent – with what eminent results!). Both he and the founder, though, met the scholar returning from school – as the old man in Corundulla used to say – and gleaned a great deal from the exchange. Essentially, he was a man of God, seeking Him out in all things. He knew and followed the best of mentors, he was indefatigable in his zeal for the soul in need; if any one aspect of his priestly life shines forth it would be his love for the confessional. In community, he always put others first, always ready to help out, to substitute for a Mass, for confessions, for days on duty, always willing to perform any act of help or to run any errand or message, always willing to put you on to a worthwhile book (he was extremely well-read in ecclesiastical lore but never stuffy). He enjoyed a game of cards but, most of all, he enjoyed clerical, not to say episcopal, chat.

The memory I will always cherish is his fond remembrance of his place on the Castleknock Rugby XV; right up to the end, his photographs in two teams were placed high with his photographs of the five Fagan priests (himself and his four brothers). If he had one regret it was the frustration at being narrowly (probably unfairly) beaten by Blackrock in a semi-final. That event – and the sad sequel! – were to remain vividly in his mind as though only yesterday.

How very fitting it is that his mortal remains lie in close proximity to his fellow-parishoner and Meath-man, Fr John Hand, founder of All Hallows, who himself, had commenced his pastoral activity in St Peter's, Phibsboro'.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh sé!

Andy Spelman CM

THOMAS FAGAN CM

Born;	Oldcastle, Co Meath,16 December 1912
Entered the CM;	7 September 1932
Final Vows;	8 September 1934
Ordained priest;	22 May 1937 in Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, by Bishop Wall, Auxillary in Dublin.

APPOINTMENTS

1937-'39;	Irish College, Paris
1939-'70;	All Hallows, Drumcondra
1970-'89;	St. Peter's, Phibsboro'
1989-'91;	4, Cabra Road
1991-2001;	St. Peter's, Phibsboro'
Died;	2 October 2001
Buried;	All Hallows, Drumcondra

Father Gearóid O'Sullivan CM

In a memoir which he wrote in 1958 my father recalled his first meeting with Gearóid's father thirty-six years previously:

> He had been, I thought, somewhat inordinately self-assured and, indeed, perky and I had not on that occasion taken any great fancy to him. We were, however, to become closely associated for the next couple of years and I had no difficulty, in the course of a very short time, in forming a very high opinion of his character and abilities, and getting to like him immensely.

My reaction to Gearóid was exactly the same as my father's to his father. As boys in Castleknock we were only one year there together, and as he was in Fifth Year and I in Second Year we did not get to know each other then. He left after Fifth Year, having got the Matric, and enrolled in Pre Med in UCD. Half way through the year he switched to First Arts, but with so little preparation he failed in June. His reason for changing to Arts was that he was thinking of becoming a priest, specifically a priest of Dublin diocese. He went out to Castleknock to discuss this with Fr Tommy Hickey, who diverted him from Clonliffe to the Rock. Gearóid told me many times that Tommy Hickey had said that the Vins were secular priests living in community, and that that was what had attracted him. In his valedictory lecture in UCC, on 3 May 1991, he referred to his decision to opt for the Vins rather than the diocesan priesthood, and said that when he told his father of his decision his father said it was a good decision, because "in his experience he found bishops to be lacking in any vision about the country". All through his life the possession, or lack, of vision was an important element in Gearóid's assessment of a person's worth.

It was in the Rock that I began to get to know him. One abiding memory is his surreptitious morning visits to the garden shed to see the gardener's paper and bring himself up to date on international affairs, the Irish political scene, and soccer results. The attraction of living in community obviously did not eliminate a certain degree of independence, nor imply blank acceptance of convention.

He was ordained in 1950 and four years later I asked him to assist me at my ordination and first Mass. He was an excellent choice for this, as he told me that he was at my side should I need him, but he did not fuss and allowed me to get on with it.

He had two periods of teaching at second level, and two at third level. In St Paul's and Castleknock his main subjects were History and

English, for both of which he had great enthusiasm, especially for the former, which he communicated. He had a short period in Strawberry Hill, and he thought that he had been treated somewhat unfairly when changed from there. From his way of recalling this I would say that it did not amount to a chip on his shoulder. As he saw it, the decision to change him had already been taken, yet a confrere who knew this spoke to him, on the plane as they went to Dublin for the summer, as if he would be returning for the next academic year. Probably the reality was more complex, and also I think he realised, at least later on, that his primary degree had not provided adequate foundation for lecturing in education.

In the summer of 1964, Gearóid and I brought a group of thirty-eight boys from Fifth and Sixth Years to Italy, the first continental tour from Castleknock. We had a semi-private audience with Pope Paul VI, with two or three other groups. At the front of the hall the Pope passed along the line greeting each of the leaders. The first few received the usual papal platitudes, but when Pope Paul heard that we were from Castleknock he showed real interest, much to the amazement of the other leaders. He told us that he knew Castleknock and the Phoenix Park, as he had holidayed in the Nunciature when he was a young monsignor. At the end of our conversation he asked us if he could do anything for us, and we said "no". Outside, Gearóid said: "Why didn't we say "English in the breviary and get rid of Christy"? Christy O'Leary was the provincial at the time.

When he got the opportunity of a sabbatical in 1970, he chose to study theology in Nottingham. I cannot recall his ever mentioning why he chose there, but later on he never liked to be reminded that he had been there. He had a scatological epithet to describe that centre of learning, though he had happy memories of his residence in the cathedral presbytery and returned there many times. He spent the next two years in Cambridge and developed a great enthusiasm for theology; he once told me that he could not get enough of it. He also told me that it was in Cambridge that he learnt the importance of making breakfast in one's own room.

On his return from Cambridge he took up his post in UCC, and most summers he went to some theology course somewhere. Even though he could not get enough theology he seemed reluctant to share it, and I do not remember his ever contributing to any provincial meeting. I once asked him to write an article for *Colloque* on his experience with third level students, but he refused. In his reply to me he wrote; "One of the things I learnt very early is that you can do what you think best if you keep out of print". I suspect he had a fear of being quoted. In formal

lectures or in print he would have expressed himself in a balanced way, but I could understand his fear of being quoted for remarks made in conversation, at table or in the community room. When in full flight he could express himself in a colourful way. When he came to the punch line of his argument he had a way of looking straight at you, with his left eye partly closed, with his finger pointing at you, and uttering the sound which novelists write as "Hmph".

I think he found his appointment to UCC to be the one in which he was happiest. In running the course for the Diploma in Catechetics he had a very large degree of autonomy, which suited him. He also liked the whole atmosphere of university life. In 1976, he went up for election to the Governing Body, and on his publicity leaflet he stated: "If elected, I would hope to contribute a fresh viewpoint to the resolution of College problems. I particularly emphasise the need for Christian human values at UCC". (I wonder why he proposed to contribute a fresh "viewpoint" rather than a "vision"). He did not get elected, but he told me that if he had started his campaign earlier he probably would have been successful. In spite of this assertion he never again offered himself to the electorate. He gradually got involved in the university chaplaincy and in ecumenism. When he retired from teaching his chaplaincy ministry became full-time and led to his being appointed Dean of the Honan Chapel, a title which he liked.

His great recreational relaxation was the history and operation of railways in Ireland, on which he was very knowledgeable. Immediately after ordination in 1950, he joined the Irish Railway Record Society, and later on served for a time as chairman of the Munster Area. Unfortunately he never gave a formal lecture to the Society nor contributed an article to its Journal, apart from one very short item. Perhaps, once again, he did not wish to be quoted.

He was in Dublin in February 2001 and I suggested he should come out to Rickard House to see Vinny O'Brien and Maurice Carbery. I met him at Seapoint station, but when he saw the slight hill on Alma Road up to where I had parked the car, he said he could not make it and asked me to bring the car down. I had not realised that his health had deteriorated to that extent. When he was leaving later he told me how impressed he had been with the set-up in Rickard House, and I think he filed it away in his mind as the place to be should his health deteriorate to the stage when he would need nursing care. But a period of deteriorating health in a nursing home, leading to eventual death, would have been tame in comparison with falling dead at the dinner table in Florence. Why be conventional?

Tom Davitt CM

GEAROID M O'SULLIVAN CM

Born;	December 18 1924
Entered the CM;	September 7 1943
Final Vows;	September 8 1945
Ordained priest;	May 28 1950 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, by Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS;

1950-'52	St Vincent's, Sunday's Well and UCC
1952-'56	St Paul's, Raheny
1956-'59	St Mary's, Strawberry Hill
1959-'70	St Vincent's, Castleknock
1970-'71	Cathedral House, Nottingham
1971-'73	St Edmund's House, Cambridge
	St Vincent's, Sunday's Well and UCC

Died	September 26 2001
Buried	St Finbarr's, Cork