



SSPX



# In Principio

Superior's Letter

A Visionary for Catholic Ireland

Celtic Christianity

Pontmain—the Story of a Miracle



Basilica of Our Lady of Pontmain in France. Read the story of the miracle on p. 21. Cover page portrays the artwork of Harry Clarke created in 1918 for St Barrahan's Church of Ireland in Co. Cork.





Fr. Griego leads the Cork parish in praying the Rosary on 26 October in solidarity with Catholics around the country, who gathered together on the coasts to pray for the continued protection of the unborn in Ireland.

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Letter from the Superior	6
Visionary for a Catholic Ireland	12
Celtic Christianity	16
Pontmain—Story of a Miracle	21
Storming Heaven for the Unborn	26
Picture Collage	28
Addresses	31

# In Principio

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# Letter from the Superior

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Rev. Fr. Vicente A. Griego, SSPX Superior of Ireland

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD (John 1:1). By sin, mankind cast away the Word of God, and over the world fell the darkness of God's absence. Conflict was born when angels and men chose to abandon grace, to withdraw from the light of God's grace. The contrast between light and darkness metaphorically presents to our understanding the inability of good and evil to co-exist – where light penetrates, darkness recedes; where darkness prevails, light is unwelcome.

Christ, the Light of truth and goodness, is the Son of God, born a man on earth 2000 years ago. Christ came to free men from the darkness of sin, which separates men from God. Yet, this Light seems unable to

dispel the evils that darken men's lives. How is it that the Light of the Omnipotent God seems restrained by the darkness of evil? How can we persist in a separation from God, if God desires us to be *with* Him?

God loves perfectly and unconditionally; but men are not so generous and often set unfair terms before reciprocating their "love". When men refuse to *accept* God's love, men refuse to *love* God. Men are free and must use their freedom rightly.

Free will is a pre-requisite to be able to love. This means we may love wisely or wrongly. We misuse our liberty when we choose to love creatures more than the Creator, Who, infinitely good and lovable, is uniquely able to satisfy our desire for happiness. A wrong use



of freedom thrusts souls into the darkness of sin – men abandon the Light of God, meant to brighten men’s lives, if men would only “allow” it: ... *the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it; ...He came unto His own, and His own received Him not* (John 1:4, 11).

The Light shines from heaven into this world to calling men to perfection: ...*the Lord appeared to [man]: and said unto him: I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be perfect* (Genesis 17:1). The ideal of perfection, conformity to God’s Will, is attractive, but our habit is to inordinately cling to passing joys and comforts. We dread forsaking and losing them despite the advantages of lasting union with God. Clinging to creatures, we burrow into the sullied earth, ever further from the Light – we choose to live in the dark.

Should we dare to step out of the darkness, we will necessarily expose our weaknesses. The fear of revealing our emptiness, failings, and sinfulness, convinces us to seek protection in the obscurity of darkness. We foolishly believe it safer to

stand *close* to the light (rather than *in* the light), in shadow, where our pretence of good may be sufficiently revealed, but where our discernible evils are better concealed.

Christ, the Light, illumines man’s good and dispels the errors that make him false. The challenge of perfection, to be integrally good, is frightening because we do not sufficiently trust the goodness of God. We live as if mediocrity will bring us happiness, and that the profane will satisfy our cravings for peace, rather than believe God will make us truly happy. This is one reason why we are reluctant to step out of the darkness – we are afraid of letting go of our possessions if we are to possess God. Our happiness, however, can be realised only in and with God.

Another reason we fear the Light of God’s truth is that we will be exposed for what we really are without Him – nothing and sin! Hardly a compliment to our pride, we easily prefer to think ourselves better than we really are, and we greatly desire that others think us without defects. God’s light necessarily reveals to us, and to

others (perhaps we fear this most), our emptiness, our weakness, and our failures. If we truly trusted Our Lord, we would run to the Light to be filled with God's goodness, fortified with God's omnipotence, and be perfected by God's grace.

To stand in the light means we must leave the shadows of darkness, we must abandon vain pursuits and subordinate all legitimate endeavours and possessions in pursuit of greater union with God. Standing in the Light of Christ, we may be transformed from earthly beings, dark and discouraged, to heavenly beings, light and confident. Subordinating the cares of this life to the aim of perfecting our love for God, we increasingly live in His resplendence and perfection. This, Our Lord promises us, is our perfect happiness.

Would that we grasped this truth with great conviction in these days of preparation for Christmas! A great means to fortify our conviction is Christ's wonderful Gift – the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the source of all graces.

The Mass presents the clear truths of Faith for our contemplation. Christ's Light first shone serenely from Bethlehem, when It seemed faint and fragile; It exploded in magnificent brilliance from atop the Cross, when It appeared weak and extinguished. Mysteriously, Christ challenges believers to persevere in the Light of Faith, which sees beyond the limitations of the material world. We transcended the limitations of this dark life of mortality by an act of Faith, whereby we truly live supernaturally, our hearts and minds fixed on the eternal Light that ever shines resplendent! This is Christ the Light's great victory – to exalt lowly men to a divine union.

Integral doctrine is richly and clearly taught in the venerable and ancient Rite of the Tridentine Latin Mass and is terribly shrouded in the doctrinal poverty and ambiguity of Paul VI's New Mass of 1970. An earthly vulgarisation of the Mass has defrauded many Catholics (and many others) of the pristine teachings of timeless doctrine, the realistic supernatural virtues, and the brilliant purification of mind,





heart and body, all of which are lavishly presented in the Mass of Trent, which aptly draws humble men to conformity to God's Will.

Pope John Paul II's 1984 "Indult", *Quattuor abhinc annos*, and his 1988 Apostolic Letter, *Ecclesia Dei*, merely tolerated the Tridentine Rite under unfair restrictions and held it as inferior to the New Mass. Even Benedict XVI's 2007 "Motu Proprio", *Summorum Pontificum*, which removed many of his predecessors' restrictions, maintained a preference for the New Mass, and cited its "spiritual richness and... theological depth" (loc. cit.). Patently, the fruits of the New Mass have been disas-

trous: e.g. sacrilegious liturgical innovations, empty churches, disdain for the Sacraments. Due to the lack of doctrinal orthodoxy and the conviction to preach it, could one expect otherwise!? When Churchmen fail to preach integral truth, the darkness of ignorance opens the way to error, which allows the proliferation of evils. Darkness grows deeper.

The attempts of these "well-meaning" Popes have failed to procure the restoration of the Church and Christian society, simply because integral truth is compromised. Christ's truth illumines with piercing purity – compromise clouds the truth and casts dark shadows of

doubt. Vatican II and its adherents have obscured the truth by a false ecumenism and have replaced Christ's truth with a man-centred progressivism, summed up liturgically in the New Mass. Consequently, we cannot participate in or cooperate with the promotion of this defective rite, lest we contribute to the confusion that obscures the Light of truth and holiness – in ourselves and in others.

True devotion for the Holy Mass is not achieved by having merely a sentimental attachment to the “Old Mass”. This disposition has easily lured many to accept the doctrinally compromised propositions of John Paul II's “Indult” or Benedict XVI's “Motu Proprio”, as sound remedies to the errors destroying the faith of many millions, today. The “traditional groups” that find themselves restrained from teaching or integrally living in accord with the profound truths they ceremoniously appreciate in the “Old Mass”, take a weak position, if their aim is to restore in the world the Light of Christ. Such a compromise has not and will not counter the blackening smog of Vatican II.

Integral truth with conformity in action must go hand in hand for the Light to break the darkness – without the light of truth, we can neither give glory to God nor save our souls. Neither from fear nor for comfort's sake, may we hide the truth: *Now no man lighting a candle covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it upon a candlestick, that they who come in may see the light* (Luke 8:16).

In these days of Advent, and throughout the days of Christmas that follow, let us purge from our lives any attitude of indifference, neglect, or sloth, with respect to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The doctrinal purity, the uncompromised and resplendent beauty, and the profound solemnity of the Tridentine Mass, will help us to appreciate the Light of Truth and to live its transforming efficacy.

What better or more certain way to prepare ourselves to receive Our Lord in the joy of His Nativity than by devoutly, and if possible, more frequently, attending Holy Mass during Advent? Devout participation at Holy Mass will necessarily





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enlighten us to a better recollection, seeing Christ in our daily lives, whereby we stand in the radiant beauty of God's Light. This is the ideal proposed by Archbishop Lefebvre, who urged us *to live the Mass!*

Dear friends, be assured of my prayers as we prepare for the dawn of another year. Your generosity in supporting the Society's apostolate in Ireland is greatly appreciated and absolutely needed. Without your support, we would not be able to meet the material and spiritual demands laid to our charge. Your generosity is assured of God's many blessings. Continue the spiritual combat for the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the reign of Christ over all Ireland!

I send my priestly blessing to you all and beg your kind prayers, which are so important to sustain our spiritual endeavours. May God be glorified by our good efforts to stand in the Light of Christ and to shine in His virtue, whereby God is glorified, dispels the darkness of evil, and manifests Himself to us – Emmanuel, *God among us!*

In Christ the King,

Rev. Vicente A. Griego  
Superior  
Autonomous House of Ireland

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# Visionary for a Catholic Ireland

Insight into the life of Edward Cahill S.J.

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By Fr. Francis Gallagher

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*Fr. Edward Cahill (1868-1941) lived through a tumultuous and definitive time for Ireland, and hoped his country would capitalise on its newfound freedom to promote the orthodox values of a true Christian society. Fr. Gallagher, following Dr. Morrissey's biography on Fr. Cahill, gives us a glimpse into the life and visions of this heroic son of Eire.*

## HIS YOUTH

When Father Edward Cahill died in 1941 he was a well-known exponent of Catholic social teaching. Today few know what this is or who Cahill was.

He was born near Rathkeale in County Limerick in 1868. Aged 15 he entered Mungret College, the diocesan seminary. He then went to St. Patrick's College Maynooth where he decided to become a Jesuit. He spent some time in Jesuit houses and was ordained in 1897 at the age of 29.

He returned to Mungret where he became the Rector in 1913. The emphasis there on both piety and culture pleased him. *The Mungret Annual* of

1942 describes him as "...devoting himself wholeheartedly to the intellectual and spiritual formation of young aspirants to the priesthood" (Morrissey p.35).

Morrissey tells us: "His position as Rector gave him greater freedom to express his views on subjects such as social justice, patriotism and the Irish language."

## THE TROUBLES

When the 1916 rising broke out Cahill was transferred to Galway. He was not involved in the fighting but some superiors were suspicious of his thinking on the national question.



He returned to Mungret in 1921. Although there was now a truce Cahill learned that many atrocities had occurred in the area including the murder by the Black and Tans of his friend Michael O'Callaghan, the Mayor of Limerick. So national feeling was still running high in the college.

The truce led to a treaty which in turn led to a tragic civil war due to disagreement over its terms. Cahill avoided taking sides.

## HIS THOUGHTS & ACTION

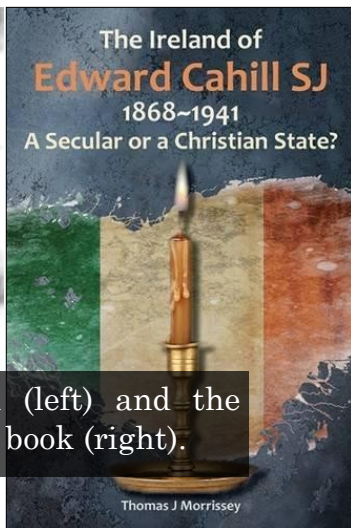
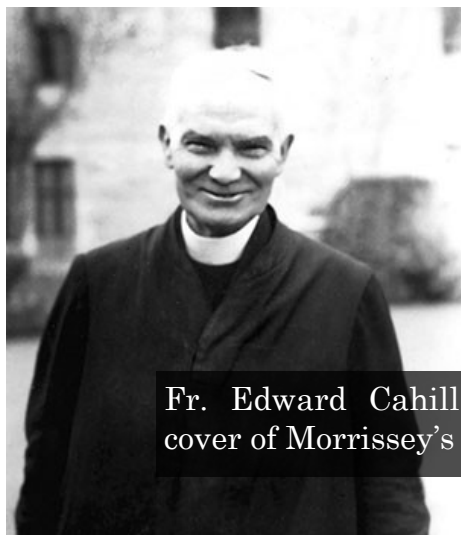
Fr. Cahill wrote many articles on social and historical topics. He believed sociology should be studied from a Catholic rather than a utilitarian perspective.

He saw a need to reorgan-

ise Irish society which had been secularised and weakened by liberalism under British rule. In 1926 he formed a lay organization *An Rioghath* (The League of the Kingdom of Christ) to propagate a better knowledge of Catholic principles which would then be implemented in Irish public life. Its members were advised to bring its values and philosophy to their places of work and influence.

## FREEMASONRY

In his work *Freemasonry and the anti-Christian Movement* Cahill shows how freemasonry and similar movements aim to overthrow Christianity and replace it with naturalism. Many were not aware of its anti-Christian nature. Many



Fr. Edward Cahill (left) and the cover of Morrissey's book (right).

Irish nationalists were influenced by freemasonry.

*The Framework of a Christian State.* Morrissey aptly describes this as Cahill's *Magnum Opus*. It was intended mainly for social science students who accept Catholic teaching. But Cahill also saw it as an opportunity to remind Europe, still recovering from World War I, that there must be a return to Christian civilisation which is the only civilisation suited to man's nature. He quotes Pope Leo XIII who maintained that, although the Church's immediate purpose was saving souls, she had also been a source of great temporal benefits.

This book also deals with individual rights and duties, the family, the state, capital and labour and the employment of women. Cahill also stresses the crucial role of religion in public life. His appendix on Ireland shows that he has no illusions about the state of the country. Here too the solution is a return to a Christian way of life.

## THE 1937 CONSTITUTION

Cahill's friend Eamon D Valera became head of govern-

ment in 1932. Cahill was among those consulted when De Valera began devising a new constitution. The 1937 Constitution begins indeed by stating: "In the name of the Most Holy Trinity from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and states must be referred, we the people of Eire...do hereby...give to ourselves this Constitution". This preamble was largely Cahill's work.

However Article 44 merely states: "The State recognises the *special position* of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the *great majority of the citizen's*". And elsewhere: "The State recognizes *other religious denominations existing in Ireland*". De Valera of course wished to placate the northern protestants in order to facilitate progress towards Irish unity. In the Spanish Constitution however, the Catholic religion was "*the religion of the state*" enjoying "*official protection*".

Father Cahill, recalling constant papal teaching, claimed that the State, while *tolerating* non-Catholic religions, itself must publicly

profess the Catholic Faith. This the Irish State manifestly failed to do in 1937.

### THE BANKING INQUIRY

According to Fr Cahill and *An Rioghath* the banking system existed to serve the people. In reality this was not so. They hoped that the establishment of a banking inquiry would bring reforms. But a majority of those involved, including a Catholic bishop, opposed any significant reforms. So the Irish banking system, modeled on the British, remained a money making machine and not a service

This was not true of *Muintir na Tire* (the people of the land) whose object was to educate people to a realisation of the importance of the agricultural calling. At their 1938 social week Cahill declared that if Ireland remained tied to the English monetary system her rural population would continue to decline.

### HIS DEATH

In 1939 and 1940 Cahill wrote many essays and corresponded with many individuals.

However in 1941 he became seriously ill and died on 16 July “after a long and trying illness borne with exemplary patience” (Morrissey p.191).

In his final paragraph Dr. Morrissey remarks: “There is no doubt but that Edward Cahill by his work, enthusiasm and genuineness in belief and manner, enriched the society in which he lived, bonded people together in a selfless cause in the wake of the Civil War and through individuals enhanced social, legal and even political life. Of few can so much be said” (Morrissey p.199).

Morrissey is generally sympathetic in his approach. His book is thoroughly researched and is also quite readable. At any rate the majority of Cahill's work is undoubtedly still relevant based as it is on the unchanging principles of Catholic social teaching as explained by the popes throughout history. It can still be read and studied with profit. Let us pray that one day soon it will be put into practice. The confused and decadent era in which we live has need of sound thinkers and hard workers like Fr. Edward Cahill to deal with its many problems.

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# Celtic Christianity

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By Brian Nugent

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Charles Doherty, a renowned expert on early Christian Ireland, recently took note of the fact that “interest in and admiration for ‘Celtic’ Christianity is booming”.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the result is that the Irish saints of the Golden Age are not extolled for their Christianity, but their greatness is accredited to the world of ancient pagan Ireland. They conclude that the doctrine of the early Celtic monks and peoples drew more from pagan lore rather than from the Christianity of modern times.

What precisely is Celtic Christianity? It is an attempt to co-opt the great heroes, monastic sites and books of the Golden Age of Irish Christianity into the world of the Celtic druids and pagan practices. It is a movement to celebrate the great figures, sites, and spiritualities of early Christianity apart from Christianity itself. This bias against the Church partly has its roots in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when An-

glican churchmen such as Rev. George T Stokes (1843-1898) and Canon John Healy (1850-1942) used this opportunity to express their opposition to the ‘unIrish’ Ultramontanist and Jansenistic spirit of Christianity, claiming, inter alia, that the “authentic traditions” of the Celtic Church justified clerical marriage and the breach with Rome.

Many of the attacks on the early Irish Church are based on two controversial offices of the ancient Church. The first of these offices was the ‘coarb’, who was the successor of a holy man or saint. The ‘erenagh’ on the other hand was the administrator in the absence of a recognised saint with his corresponding coarb. The controversy then is that some of these ‘coarbs’ could be considered at least the equivalent of abbots or maybe bishops and there is some talk of the office being hereditary. Hence, the controversy arises from the fact that, although it is the custom



for Catholic bishops to remain celibate, somehow these bishops managed to pass on their power through inheritance.

In fact, many historians have always held the view that these offices were not held by clerics in Holy Orders, but rather by laymen. But if these positions were in fact inherited by clerics, this was normally not passed to them from their fathers, but rather through membership in a particular tribe. There is no doubt however, that there were some abuses at times in the Irish Church during the 800 years or so of what is known as the Celtic Church (roughly 400-1200). At some periods these abuses did include concubinage.

But there were likewise periods when such abuses were stamped out, like in the resurgence of the Céli Dé in the 800's and the onset of St Malachy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The story of St Malachy is well known and the Céli Dé had fought a similar fight in their time: "Their attitude to sexual sins was severe. A priest who had sinned against chastity lost his priest's orders and was never able to recover them, even though he repented and did penance."<sup>2</sup> Thus, whenever sexual laxity was present, this was considered an abuse and dealt with accordingly. It therefore cannot be considered as a principled deliberate change of Church practice, the like of which have taken place in Protestantism



and the Orthodox world.

The unique isolation and singular character of the Irish Church are also used to allege that it was not a faithful predecessor of the modern Catholic Church. The Celtic Cross is a classic example which is often used to demonstrate this, since it bears a sun shape in the middle. For some, this indicates that these old monks were really linked to a kind of druidic sun worship. The monks certainly copied over some older practices of the Celts, but it was with good purpose, as one scribe relates in an ancient Irish manuscript describing some of the arts of the Tuatha De Danann: "And although the faith came, these arts were not driven out, for they were good."<sup>3</sup> Once Christianity was universally accepted, they no longer feared the old customs and practices, but rather retained them in a Christian context. Hence in the centre of the Celtic Cross they frequently placed an image of Our Lord, as He was the true sun, and they worshipped only Him thereafter.

There is furthermore a good deal of documentary evi-

dence for the link between that old Irish Church and the traditional Catholic Church of modern times. Among these documents are the *Cathach* from c.560-600, the *Antiphonary of Bangor* from c.680-691, and the *Stowe Missal* from c.792. The first named contains the Psalms; the second contains countless old hymns and collects like the *Te Deum*, *Gloria in excelsis* and *Sancti Venite* (which is the first appearance of this oldest known Eucharistic hymn); while the third is a proper missal, very recognisable in its contents to any student of the Latin Mass. This missal even has one prayer whose Roman origins cannot be disputed: "pro piissimis imperatoribus et pro omni exercitu Romano, i.e. for (our) most devout emperors and all the Roman army."<sup>4</sup> Countless other texts have survived in a copied form from that time period, such as the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, one of the oldest and best preserved collections of canon law to be read anywhere and written in Ireland c.669-748. There is also a text from a homily delivered in Ireland c.700. Preserved in the French city of Cambrai, it is a commentary on Matthew 16:24:



Pilgrims gathered at the Hill of Slane earlier this year to commemorate St. Patrick's Paschal fire lit in defiance of High King Laoghaire.

“This is the word which our Lord Jesus saith to every one of the race of men, that he banish from him his vices and his sins, and that he gather virtues and receive stigmata and signs of the Cross for Christ's sake, so long as he is in power of body and soul, that he follow the tracks of our Lord in good thoughts.”<sup>5</sup> Needless to say, these texts are full of ideas which are exclusively Christian in nature and would no doubt be very foreign to a modern day druid! Finally, consider the correspondence and personnel that travelled back and forth between Ireland and Rome during that period, as one commentator pointed out: “We find St. Columbanus in his letter to Pope Gregory II stat-

ing that the Irish got their faith from Rome; Cummian in his letter on the Paschal controversy reiterates the statement; Probus states that St. Patrick had his mission from St. Celestine. The Canon of St. Patrick in the Book of Armagh, decrees that *causae majores* are to be referred to Rome for final settlement.”<sup>6</sup> While controversies like the date of Easter, were certainly discussed, the point is that in all this contact between Rome and Ireland there is no mention of a ‘Celtic Church’ with some separate identity free from the doctrine of Rome. The whole ‘Celtic Church’, as a non-Roman Catholic Church, is very much a modern retrospective label.

In light of these facts, one can certainly agree with this modern historian writing in the authoritative *New History of Ireland*: “the great controversies on this very issue initiated in the sixteenth century, and still rumbling on in the twentieth, have been laid to rest, at least in scholarly circles. It is now clear that the early Irish church recognised papal authority in the same way as did other western churches: Rome was the final court of appeal for great causes and a city peculiarly sanctified by the blood of many martyrs, from Peter and Paul onwards.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Footnotes**

1. *History Ireland*, vol.8, no.3, p.50, 52.
2. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín edit., *A New History of Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), vol.1, p.319.
3. R A Stewart Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (Dublin, pre 1940), vol.1, p.173.
4. *Studies* (Winter, 1961), p.379.
5. Whitley Stokes, *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus: a collection of old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose, and verse* (Cambridge, 1903), p.244-245.
6. *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* vol.9 (1888), p.202.
7. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín edit., *A New History of Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), vol.1, p.lxix. A reference to the controversies of the Reformation times can be read in Fr Henry Fitzsimons', *A Catholick Refutation* (Roan, 1608), p.4 and 7.





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# Pontmain

## The Story of a Miracle

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By **Gina Connelly**

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It was the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1871. The lanes and cottages of a small French hamlet were covered with a blanket of soft white snow. The stars were already beginning to light the clear dark sky and the air was bitterly cold. In the quiet ordinariness of a rural village something extraordinary was about to take place, something which would lift the spirits of a people slowly losing hope. The village of Pontmain, of the diocese of Laval in Northern France, was about to take a significant place in the pages of history.

The Franco-Prussian war was at its height. Pontmain's five hundred or so inhabitants, like so many of those in other French towns and villages, were tasting the bitterness of war. The Prussian army was advancing. On the 12<sup>th</sup> it had entered Le Mans and by Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> it had reached the

gates of Laval. Thirty-eight young men from Pontmain had recently left to fight and the villagers were anxiously awaiting news. An outbreak of typhoid had been declared and smallpox was spreading. Heaven seemed deaf to the sufferings of an overburdened people. 'There is no use in praying, God is not listening', they cried.

It was against this backdrop, a scene where in human terms all seemed lost, that heaven intervened in a marvellous manner. Just before 6pm that evening, three members of the Barbadette family, César and his two young sons; Eugène, 12 and Joseph, 10, had been working in a thatched barn in the village preparing food for the animals.

The arrival at the barn of Jeannette Détais, a local woman, afforded Eugène the

opportunity of a small break. Making his way outside the barn, his gaze was drawn to the sky above a neighbouring dwelling. There, about twenty feet over the rooftop, he saw a lady of incomparable beauty. She wore a dark blue dress strewn with golden stars. Her veil was black and on her head he could see a plain crown of gold, encircled by a thin red band. This is how his brother Joseph, who had quickly joined Eugène outside the barn (who afterwards became a priest of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate) and described what he saw: “to the freshness of youth was added the most exquisite delicacy of feature and of tint, the complexion being pale rather than otherwise. Smiles of ineffable sweetness played about the mouth. The eyes, of unutterable tenderness, were fixed on us... Like a true mother, she seemed happier in looking at us than we in contemplating her.”

As word spread around the village people gathered in the street, hoping to see what vision adorned the sky above the Guidecoq’s house. Two young boarders from the local

school, Jeanne-Marie Lebossé, 9, and Françoise Richier, 11, were brought outside by their teacher, Sister Vitaline. Françoise was the first to see, then Jeanne-Marie. Both agreed with the description given by the boys. Little by little, the children described more of what they saw. An oval frame surrounded the vision. Four candles stood on horizontal supports inside the oval, two at shoulder height and two at knee height. A small red cross had appeared on the lady’s heart.

Filled with wonder at what the children described, the people chanted the *Magnificat*. Suddenly in the space between the roof of the house and the feet of the vision, a banner appeared. Against its pale background letters were slowly formed. By the end of the *Magnificat* the children could read the heavenly exhortation: MAIS PRIEZ MES ENFANTS (i.e. but pray my children) in printed golden capitals. It was then about half past seven, the vision having lasted for over an hour.

As the people prayed, another sentence followed on the same





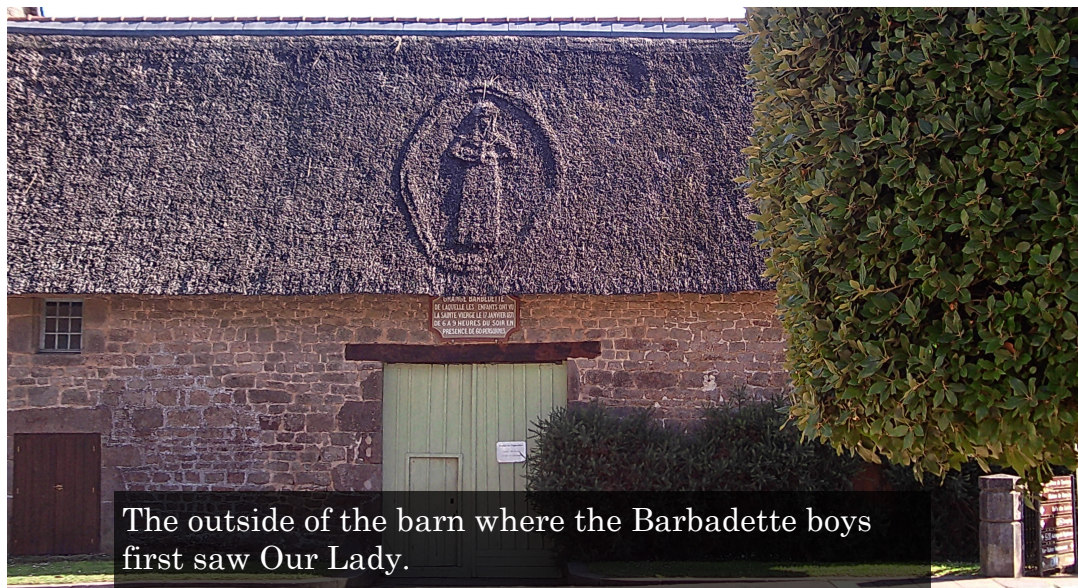
line as before: DIEU VOUS EXAUCERA EN PEU DE TEMPS (God will answer you soon).

The prayers of the villagers of Pontmain and of the French people were being answered in a unique and definitive way. They now knew with certainty that Heaven was not deaf to their plight. And in the back and forth of this most unusual vision Our Lady would teach them to pray without ceasing. Before the end of the *Salve Regina* a second line of writing had formed, underlined by a large line of golden light: MON FILS SE LAISSE TOUCHER (i.e. My Son allows Himself to be moved). The in-

scription was now complete.

From that very evening, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1871, the enemy troops did not take a single further step towards the west of France. Here are the words of the records of the German high-command: “The advance upon Laval of the 20<sup>th</sup> Division (which we have noted was decided upon and ordered) was not carried out because on the night of January 17-18, the Supreme Commander made it known that it was not planned to proceed further towards the west with the Second Army.”

Then, on the date of the 18<sup>th</sup>, we read: “The pursuit of the adversary (that is to say of



The outside of the barn where the Barbadette boys first saw Our Lady.

the French) by the detachment of General Schmidt thus came to an end because of these proscriptions.”

From the evening of January 17<sup>th</sup> events took a sudden and humanly speaking, inexplicable turn.

Before the evening of January 17<sup>th</sup>, the Prussians unquestionably wished to march upon Laval. After the evening of January 17<sup>th</sup>, indeed during the very night which followed, a formal and unexpected order prevented General Schmidt from taking Laval. And a short time afterwards, in fact only ten days later, on January 28<sup>th</sup>, the armistice was signed.

Pious Frenchmen knew their salvation lay in the hands of their Blessed Mother.

Our Lady of Hope of Pontmain had saved them.

### **The prayers of a nation**

MON FILS SE LAISSE TOUCHER (My Son allows Himself to be moved)

What moved Heaven to grant

this miracle in the midst of such great catastrophe for the people of France?

We can only answer with Our Lady's own words. The inscription spoke firstly of, and therefore gave precedence to, prayer. “But pray my children”, it read... the 'mais' (translated into English as 'but') in French implying an insistence on the importance of what Our Lady requested.

And it seems it was indeed prayer which had won this miracle for the French.

At Saint-Brieuc, a society of prayer under the title of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Hope had been founded in the year 1848 for the salvation of the Church and of France. And it was there that the hymn “Mother of Hope”, repeated during the apparition of Pontmain, and so often in the village chapel in the preceding months, was composed. During the war, Saint-Brieuc was the centre of fervent prayers. As disaster followed upon disaster, it was decided that a solemn vow should be made to Our Lady of Hope. Precisely on January 17<sup>th</sup>, in the evening, at



half past five, a request for the vow was presented. The vow was immediately pronounced, and during all of that evening until 9pm solemn prayers were recited in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Hope. It was the day of the apparition of Pontmain. These were the very hours of the arrival and departure of our Heavenly Mother.

On the same evening of January 17, 1871, in the Chapel of the Immaculate Heart, of Our Lady of Victories in Paris, solemn prayers had begun in order to obtain through Mary the cessation of the war and the deliverance of the French capital.

### **A lesson for our times**

One hundred and eighty miles from Paris, and only twenty-seven miles south of the medieval shrine of Mont St. Michel, lies the village of Pontmain. It was here that God deigned to answer the ardent prayers of a nation threatened by war and disease. It was here, a short distance from the border of the French provinces of Normandy and Brittany, that Our Lady gave a message to her children. A little more than eight years

later, another heavenly tableau would be seen on a gable wall, in the rural village of Knock, in another land - but for now all that lay in the future. For now it was enough for a nation to know that it had been saved through the prayers of her children and the protection of the Blessed Mother.

As a new year approaches, a year which threatens to change the very fabric of our country and the very foundations of our nation, let us turn to Mary. Let us learn and remember the great lesson of the apparition of Pontmain: MAIS PRIEZ MES ENFANTS (but pray my children).

God grant that we may!

Our Lady of Hope of Pontmain, pray for us!

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### ***Footnote***

*The SSPX has recently acquired a property in Pontmain close to the barn outside of which the Barbadettes first saw the apparition of Our Lady.*

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# Storming Heaven for the Unborn

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By Fr. Marcel Ockerse

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This Spring the government plans to hold a referendum in Ireland on whether or not the Irish constitution should be changed regarding its restriction of abortion. At the moment, the eighth amendment of the constitution, approved by way of a referendum in 1983, admits that an unborn child has a right to life, a right which is as important as the mother's right to life and the state guarantees to respect this right of the child and to defend and vindicate it, as far as possible, by its laws.

Although the eighth amendment is not perfect, it prevents the mainstream legalisation of abortion in Ireland. Already, many pro-life groups are at work drawing out the 'save the eighth' vote for the upcoming referendum. Their work is good, praiseworthy, and essential to success. However, if we seek an im-

provement of the eighth amendment, there is another aspect even more essential, and that is the work of prayer and penance.

The Save8 prayer group is a spiritual work dedicated to driving abortion out of Ireland, beginning with obtaining a truly Catholic outcome for the referendum next year. Against the overwhelming opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil, this can only be done by the intervention of God's mercy, and so we turn to prayer.

Members of the prayer group offer daily a short prayer in union with all the other members and are allocated one day per month on which they spend an hour in prayer, at 2 o'clock in the morning. The power of nocturnal prayer flows from its purity of intention. We break our night's sleep for the



sole purpose of rising to speaking with our God, to plead for the protection of dear life.

By an unbroken succession of nocturnal holy hours, beginning on the feast of Christ the King in October until the referendum next year, we hope to “save the eighth” and obtain, over and above, the universal protection of life when it needs it most.

**Daily Prayer for the outcome of the referendum.**

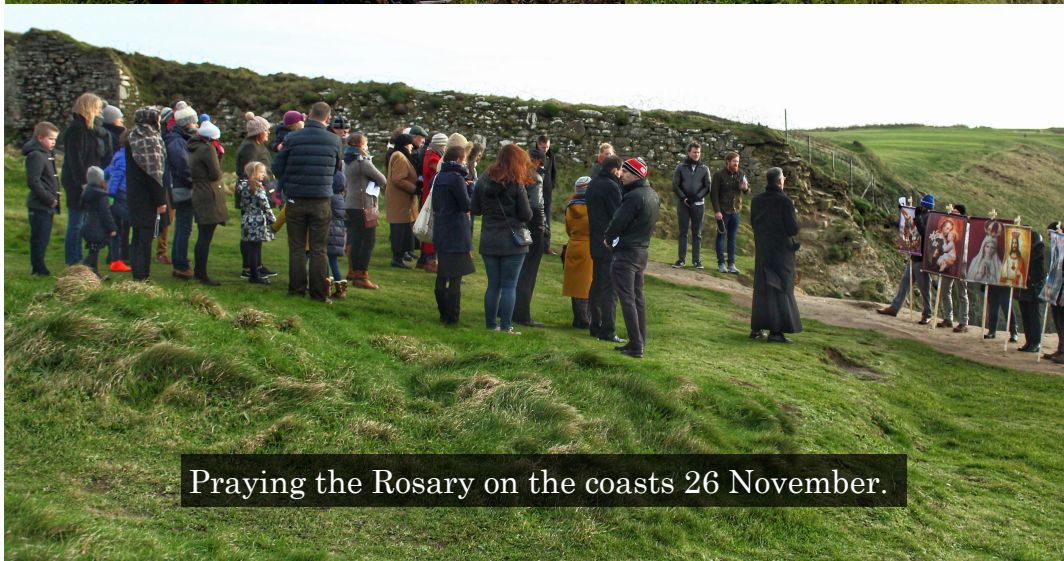
*O God, our refuge and our strength, Who art the Author of mercy, harken to the devout prayers of Thy Church, and grant that what we faithfully beseech, we may effectually obtain. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

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To join the prayer group, email:

**[life.catherinesweden@gmail.com](mailto:life.catherinesweden@gmail.com)**





Praying the Rosary on the coasts 26 November.





All Saints Parties, Christ the King party in St. John's Hall, Crusade Outing in Athlone, Christ the King procession (from top).





1st Communicants in Cork (top); Christmas carolling at a nursing home in Athlone (bottom).

# The Priestly Society of Saint Pius X in Ireland

Rev. Vicente A. Griego, Superior

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## Mass Centres

### **Saint John the Evangelist Church**

1 Upper Mounttown Road  
Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin  
A96 P793  
(01) 284 2206

### **Corpus Christi Church**

Connaught Gardens  
Athlone, Co. Westmeath  
N37 E671  
(090) 643 3703

### **Saint Pius V Chapel**

78 Andersonstown Road  
Belfast, Co. Antrim BT11 9AN  
Mr. McKeown (028) 9445 3654

### **Our Lady of the Rosary**

Shanakiel Road  
Sunday's Well, Co. Cork  
T23 T389  
(090) 643 3703

### **Our Lady of Knock Chapel**

Unit 5 Richbrook Business  
Park, Mill Road, Bessbrook,  
Newry, Co. Down BT35 7DT

## Residences

### **Saint Pius X House**

12 Tivoli Terrace South  
Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin  
A96 KV65  
(01) 284 2206

Fr. Vicente Griego  
Fr. Pierpaolo Petrucci  
Fr. Francis Gallagher  
Fr. Marcel Ockerse

### **Saint Joseph's House**

Court Devenish House  
Court Devenish Lane  
Athlone, Co. Westmeath  
N37 NF77  
(090) 643 3703

Fr. Leo Boyle  
Fr. Patrick Kimball

*Visit [fsspx.ie](http://fsspx.ie) for complete schedules, weekly bulletins, and more information.*

Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X

The Priestly Society of Saint Pius X is an international society of common life without vows, whose purpose is the Priesthood and that which pertains to it.

The main goal of the Society is to preserve the Catholic faith in its fullness and purity, to teach its truths, and to diffuse its virtues. Authentic spiritual life, the sacraments, and the traditional liturgy are its primary means of bringing this life of grace to souls.