



SSPX



In Principio

Irish Culture and Custom -
Portraying a Nation's Faith.

Superior's Letter

St. Patrick's Purgatory - A History of Lough Derg

Ár gCreideamh i mBeal na nDaoine

The Angelus - An Irish Perspective



Station Island, Lough Derg, Co. Donegal. Read our article on the history of the island on page 10

In Principio
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Letter from the Superior	6
St. Patrick's Purgatory - A History of Lough Derg	10
Ár gCreideamh i mBeal na nDaoine	18
The Angelus - An Irish Perspective	24
Picture Collage	29
Calendar of Events	31
Addresses	32

In Principio



Letter from the Superior

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

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Saint Pius X, observing the systematic corruption of Christian civilization at the start of the 20th century, took the courageous words of Saint Paul, ‘to restore all things in Christ’, as the motto of his Pontificate. He would tirelessly fight to restore, uphold and advance Christ in the short time of his reign checking the advance of the modernist and liberal for but half a century. It has been the duty of subsequent Popes and all believers in Christ to continue this crusade. Yet, immorality and heresy has greatly degraded formerly Christian civilisation, and few there are who integrally oppose the onslaught.

Today’s post-Christian and anti-God culture has vastly replaced firmly rooted customs of Christian culture that have protected virtue, upheld doctrine, and reinforced genuine civilisation. Furious attacks stemming from perverse principles have disparaged Christian civilisation and a “fashionable” and barbaric

culture, deemed progressive, unfurls all but unchecked.

This new culture is one of deception and death proceeding from the father of lies who strives to ensure the proliferation of evil, by its systematic murder of the unborn, the promotion of unnatural vice, and the vicious attack against the innocence of children in their first years of learning. The enslavement of mankind to a life of perversion and revolt against God, Who alone is man’s true and lasting happiness, ensures inevitable misery – quite the contrast from Ireland’s history as a Christian nation and civilisation that benefited nations around the world. How do modern secularists, today, dare to claim civility and disparage Ireland’s glorious past! We witness, not a new civilisation, but a new *culture* predominating in Ireland.

Conscious of our duty to know, love, and serve the one true God, we must also be conscious of our dependence upon grace to persevere in opposing the

terrible onslaught of evils. Grace transforms individuals and societies and gives birth to genuine civilisation, where truth, virtue, and order reign, freeing men from the unhappiness of sin and death.

Christian civilisation is a great bulwark inspiring hope by the collective efforts of society and culture. Consequently, we must perseveringly uphold sound cultural practices rooted in the faith to support our daily effort to live integrally the life of Christ. A genuinely Catholic culture will prove conducive to our fidelity to God and is an added element of protection from the bad influences of the counter-culture assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Though the masses have been largely duped by a language of deceit, a secular ideology and the obsession of seeking comfort at all costs, we must oppose these “progressive” snares that divorce men from God and reason from truth. If not, we risk becoming self-centred. In pursuit of worldly comfort, which plunges us into the evil of neglecting charity and our duties of state, we inevitably flee from the Cross, which is our only way to joy – happiness demands sacrifice.

The pretenders of progressive, materialistic and Godless “civilisation” promote barbarous living – neither truly progressive, nor civilised. Self-seeking is a

principle of barbaric “civilisations”, that unjustly kill, brutally torture, and fallaciously assert tyrannical dominion.

Hence, modern man is largely desensitised to the horrific crime of abortion, the victimisation of women by a propaganda that flatters vanity and silences the instinct of motherhood. Men victimise women and the medical industry profits from the carnage and devastated lives. Yet, the gravest devastation is widely wrought by the nefarious liberty *from* God, which steepens society in vice, spiritually kills millions, who forsake His salvific love.

Without God society and men cannot have peace, life or happiness, here or hereafter. Ireland’s Catholic past offers many cultural aspects that assist in maintaining the objective of guarding and augmenting union with God.

Traditionally, language, prayer and penance, have been the significantly important “staple” of Ireland’s centuries-long perseverance under oppressive enemies – within and without. A language elevated to a habitual consciousness of God and man’s loving happiness in God’s company, permeated daily life. This increased consciousness of God’s *reality*, presence and goodness, bestowed great confidence and peace in society and its members,



be courageous and walk with and like Christ in every manner of our lives, so that living faithfully and integrally in Christ in this spiritual combat, we may be victorious and rejoice with Him in heaven forever!

I wish to thank you for your generosity in spiritually and materially supporting the work of the Society of Saint Pius X in Ireland. Without your conviction and daily living the life of Christ, our work is hindered – your good efforts, sacrifices and zeal have brought forth many good fruits. Thank you!

Please pray for the advancement of the restoration of Christ in Ireland and in our souls. Prayers are necessary to implore God's blessings and grace for the work of conversion and perseverance. May God bless you and may Our Lady Immaculate prepare you for the everlasting joys of heaven.

In Christ the King,

Rev. Vicente A. Griego
Superior, Autonomous House of
Ireland



Our Lady of Fatima
warned of immodest
fashions

who instinctively lived, worked, and played in joyful and humble acknowledgement of Him.

Prayer raises the soul to a conscious union with God, Who inspires virtuous living and begets abundant graces to live in conformity with Him. Penance ever checks the greed of mankind to seek self at the cost of others and to fulfil those honourable acts of sacrifice for the good of others. As citizens of the heavenly kingdom are known by their speech, prayer, and sacrificial spirit, so too does dress identify the lover of God.

Our Lady of Fatima gravely warned us of the dangers we presently face and stressed the importance of dress to protect virtue. Perhaps we do well to re-examine how we customarily dress and act. Do we always bear the uniform of Christian virtue in exemplary manner? Or do we blend

in with the crowd with its worldly, vain, and materialistic norms that destroy souls and rebels against God? Do we in principle habitually dress as living temples of God, purchased by the shedding of the Most Precious Blood of Christ? Our Lady warned that *fashions will be introduced that will greatly displease Our Lord*. This can only mean sinful fashions – sin displeases Our Lord. Do we think little of offending our God?!

May this magazine that presents a little examination of some genuine aspects of Irish culture, which developed through its close relationship to the Cross of Christ and the love of God, be for each of us an encouragement to change for the better – that is, to be restored to Christ in all things.

Drawn nearer to the joy of Christ's victory over sin and death by the Lenten observation, may we

St. Patrick's Purgatory - A History of Lough Derg

Celine McKeown

A Penitential Island

The lakelands of Lough Derg lie nestled amidst the bleak landscape of County Donegal and within them is an island, which has long been famous throughout Christendom as the site of St Patrick's Purgatory. This sacred sanctuary is one of Ireland's most famous pilgrimage sites and has been visited by our ancestors in their tens of thousands. Being accessible only by boat, its remoteness has contributed to its popularity as a pilgrimage destination, as has its long-held association with Ireland's patron saint.

The Legacy of Lough Derg

The earliest sources referring to this pilgrimage site call it *Purgatorium Sancti Patricii* (St Patrick's Purgatory),¹ and the name of the lake on which it is situated, Lough Derg

(from *'deirc'* meaning hole or cave) seems to make reference to the manmade cave used as a penitential hideaway by St Patrick in the 5th century. Two islands on Lough Derg are of especial significance: Station Island and Saints Island. Station Island (*'Inis an Turais'* meaning island of the journey or pilgrimage) became the site of popular pilgrimage in the late medieval period and contained the artificial cave which was traditionally linked with St Patrick, while the nearby Saints Island was the site of an early medieval ecclesiastical foundation established by a Patrician contemporary, St Dabheoc (*Dobheóg*); this latter island was previously called *Oiléan Dobheóg* (Dabheoc's Island).²

Medieval texts inform us that *Purgatorium Sancti Patricii* was so named because St Patrick – who remained there fasting and praying for forty days – was granted a vision from God of Purgatory and

of the torments of Hell. The saint had fervently sought this vision as he was struggling to convince the Irish of both the temporal punishment due to sin and of sin's eternal consequences. In this vision, St Patrick witnessed the purgatorial fires where every sin must be expiated and it was made apparent to the saint that the sufferings of the souls in Purgatory could be lessened by the prayers and sacrifices of the living.

Since the earliest centuries of Irish Christianisation, Lough Derg has been revered as a sacred place but much of our information regarding St Patrick's association with it and early pilgrimage activities there, comes to us from the writings of an English Cistercian monk, known as Henry of Saltrey. In the late 12th century, Henry was engaged in writing down information gathered from Gilbert, another English monk, who had spent time in Ireland; this includes an account known as the *Tractatus de Purgatorio sancti Patricii* which recalls the otherworldly experiences of Gilbert's Irish-language translator Owein (an Irish knight) while undertaking a pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory in the c. 1140s. This does not specify the location of St Patrick's Purgatory but subsequent medieval chroniclers make it clear that it is located on an island on





Lough Derg in Donegal.³ Station Island's reputation as a popular pilgrimage destination dates from the 12th century when, in c. 1140, Augustinian canons took control of this island and the nearby Saints Island, and reinvigorated them (the Augustinians were replaced in 1497 by the Franciscans of Donegal). The focus of the medieval pilgrimage was the deep, artificial cave or pit into which pilgrims entered for a set period of time to experience the torments of Purgatory; fasting and praying were also central components of the pilgrimage, while doing the station 'rounds' may have been introduced some time later. It was believed that if one made 'the station on the island, they would be freed from the pains of purgatory and would not be lost'. Writing in 1624 on the subject of Purgatory, Pennottus stated that,

St Patrick's Purgatory is a special Purgatory of the living, in which men living in this life, being truly penitent, may by the special favour of God satisfy the pains due to their sins in this life. There is a Purgatory of the Living, and they who are truly penitent and endure those most agonising pains of suffering, shall be purged from all pains due to sin in the [same] way that infinite numbers of others, during their life, give satisfaction for the pains due to their sins in Purgatory, either by fast or by other works of penance or by

*indulgences. These, unless they commit fresh sins, leave this life for Heaven forthwith without any other purgatory.*⁴

The Station Exercises

Unless you shall do Penance, you shall all likewise perish (Luke, 13:3).

While early reports indicate that the pilgrimage dedicated to St Patrick took ten days to complete, by 1813 the three-day order of exercises became the norm. According to custom, the fast consists of a single meal of meagre food each day. One of the conditions of the pilgrimage is that the person undertaking it is fit to perform it in full and, for this reason, there are no concessions for age, illness or disability.

Seven of the island's penitential stations are probably the remains of clerics' circular stone cells, measuring about a metre in diameter, each with a narrow opening and a large modern crucifix in the centre. These so-called 'beds' are dedicated to six early Irish saints (Patrick, Brigid, Colmcille, Molaise, Brendan and Dabheoc) and one non-Irish saint, Catherine (though she seems to have superseded St Adomnán

of Iona).⁵ To 'complete' the first station, the pilgrim circles the bed praying, then kneels at its entrance, after which he walks around the inside and then kneels at the centre repeating the same prayers; this sequence of actions is repeated at all subsequent beds. After completing the 'rounds' at each bed, prayers must also be offered in and around the basilica (consecrated 1931), at the lake's edge, and at two early crosses. The pilgrim completes three stations on the first day, four during a night-long vigil when it is forbidden to sleep, one on the following day, and one more on the morning before departing the island.⁶

An International Pilgrimage Site

Historical evidence indicates that Lough Derg has boasted international appeal since the late medieval period, with contemporary accounts of safe passage being granted to foreigners to visit St Patrick's Purgatory. Even in troubled times, the island served as an important place of pilgrimage and repentance. In 1370, the site was mentioned by St Catherine of Siena in a letter written to a monk who was refused permission to make the journey to Lough Derg. Later, when the Papal Nuncio, Chiericati, reached Lough Derg in 1517, he found a book listing

the names of pilgrims of various nationalities. At that time, pilgrims were expected to undertake a ten-day pilgrimage, devoted to fasting and prayer. Persons of every age and condition endured severe austerity and bodily mortifications, and if they wished to rest, they had to sleep on the bare ground.⁷

The 'Reformation' and Penal Times

In the 16th century, the Protestant government in Dublin ordered that St Patrick's cave be filled in.⁸ Nonetheless, the pilgrims continued to travel to Lough Derg, dedicating their time on the island to fasting and prayer. In 1625, Archbishop Fleming of Dublin published a report concerning Lough Derg stating that, 'This pilgrimage was so celebrated throughout the Christian world, that many from distant parts even of the Continent visited it in a spirit of devotion'. He also reported that due to the enormous numbers travelling to the island, many had to return without making the pilgrimage because the small island could not cater for such large crowds.⁹

Lough Derg was deemed a safe haven for priests and clerics for about one hundred years after the 'Reformation' began. Prior to the closure and destruction of the buildings on Station Island and Saints Island in 1632 by the Protestant Bishop of Clogher, the

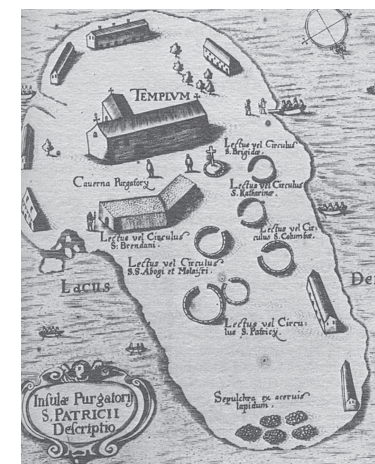
ecclesiastical complex supported an abbot and forty Franciscan friars, and it has been claimed that it was visited by approximately 450 pilgrims every day. To put a stop to the steady flow of pilgrims, the mountainous region surrounding Lough Derg was 'planted' with Protestant settlers.¹⁰ The Popery Act of 1704 (during the reign of Queen Anne) forbade all meetings and assemblies held at 'pretended places of sanctity such as St Patrick's Purgatory in Co Donegal'; despite the passing of this law, the pilgrimage was kept alive and large numbers of pilgrims continued to flock to Lough Derg.¹¹ Hugh MacMahon, Bishop of Clogher between 1707 and 1715, wrote an account of his visit to Lough Derg. In it, he stated that for three months, from the beginning of June to the end of August, thousands of men and women flocked to Station Island to perform a nine-day pilgrimage.¹² Even though prohibited by name and under the most severe penalties by Act of Parliament, the tradition of undertaking pilgrimages on this island suffered little or no interruption. During these times of hardship and uncertainty, the native Catholic population of Ireland turned to tradition. This is in evidence in 1763, when a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Angels was built on the island.¹³

The 19th Century

During the 19th century, Ireland underwent much political and social change. However, as stated by Canon O'Connor: 'the pilgrimage possessed an attraction for the Irish people which distance or time nor of place can obliterate'. He added that,

*during each season pilgrims travel from the most distant lands for the sole purpose of "making a station" at their cherished shrine. To this spirit of penance and of pilgrimage under Divine Providence may be attributed the fact that our people, deprived of all else, but rich in the priceless heritage of the faith, became the pioneers of religion in those lands to which they were exiled.*¹⁴

Records indicate that between 1800 and 1824, the average yearly number of pilgrims to Station Island was about 10,000. In the 1830s, between twelve and fifteen priests were engaged daily in hearing the confessions of the pilgrims and in attending to other duties relating to the pilgrimage. In 1834, Henry David Inglis, writing in the Gazetteer of Ireland, stated that the number of pilgrims that year totalled 19,000. In 1870, a new neo-Gothic church, also called St Mary's, was erected which replaced the earlier church.



Map of Station Island and its penitential stations by Thomas Carve in 1666. "Caverna Purgatorij" on the map is the site of the actual cave

The early 19th century had witnessed the strengthening of the people's Faith and the accompanying rise in devotional practices brought about a renewed interest in Lough Derg and a significant increase in the number of pilgrims. Like so many thousands had done before them, these pilgrims fasted, performed penitential exercises, upheld the tradition of the vigil and participated fully in the station exercises.¹⁵ Despite the gradual repealing of the Penal Laws and significant strides made in the process of Catholic Emancipation, more hardship was to hit the Irish people with the Great Famine of 1845-52 having devastating effects on the population of Ireland. Whilst there was a gradual decline

in pilgrim numbers to Station Island from the mid-19th century, the pilgrimage survives down to the present day.

Conclusion

The survival of the pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory against all odds is an indication of the enduring reverence attached to this holy place. As Bishop Healy proclaimed, 'One thing is certain – this pilgrimage has done much during the most disastrous centuries of our history to keep alive in the hearts of the people the spirit of our Holy Faith and its characteristic practices'. Canon O'Connor maintained that 'the history of St Patrick's Purgatory presents in miniature the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland'. This assertion is confirmed by the dwindling numbers of pilgrims attending the pilgrimage in recent years, which corresponds to the alarming reduction in the practice of the Faith in Ireland. Perhaps a return to these ancient penitential practices would do much to renew the spiritual fervour of our country, which is the legacy of St Patrick.



ENDNOTES

¹ In more recent times, it has been called St Patrick's Sanctuary.

² Ó Riain, P. 2011. *A Dictionary of Irish Saints*. Dublin, p. 268.

³ Harbison, P. 1991. *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The monuments and the people*. London, pp. 56-8.

⁴ Leslie, S. 1932. *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: A record from history and literature*. London.

⁵ Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, pp. 60, 65.

⁶ Cunningham, J. 1997. 'Lough Derg: The spirit of a holy place'. Available to view online at <https://www.catholicireland.net/lough-derg-the-spirit-of-a-holy-place>.

⁷ Leslie, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*.

⁸ A drawing of Station Island by Thomas Carve, dated 1666, shows the cave at the centre of the island, near the church. Some kind of cave known as 'the Prison' was visited by pilgrims from the second half of the 17th century but this was closed in the 1780s due to safety concerns. The location of the original cave has been lost to history and now all pilgrimage activities are conducted above ground. See Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, pp. 59-61.

⁹ Leslie, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*.

¹⁰ O'Connor, Rev. D. 1895. *St Patrick's Purgatory Lough Derg: Its history, traditions, legends, antiquities, topography and scenic surroundings*. Dublin.

¹¹ Shalvey, L. B. 2003. *Continuity through Change: A study of the pilgrimage to Lough Derg in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*. MA thesis, National University of Ireland Maynooth, p. 3.

¹² Leslie, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*.

¹³ Shalvey, *Continuity through Change*, p. 14.

¹⁴ O'Connor, *St Patrick's Purgatory Lough Derg*.

¹⁵ O'Connor, *St Patrick's Purgatory Lough Derg*.

Ár gCreideamh i mBéal na nDaoine

The Faith in the Language of the People

Deirdre Bean Uí Ghoibín

Éirím suas le Dia go néirí Dia liom (I rise with God, may God rise with me) *Lámh Dé im thimpeall, im suí, im luí is ag éirí Dia liom* (God's hand around me, when I sit, when I lie and when I rise with God)¹

At the beginning of the 20th century, Ireland's soul was expressed through her language: 'tír gan teanga tír gan anam' (a country without its language is a country without a soul). There was a time when the English had hoped that in taking the native language from the Irish people, they would succeed in making Ireland a good Protestant country. Throughout hundreds of years of English persecution, Ireland steadfastly kept the Faith. Ironically, less than a century after attaining independence, Ireland's soul has become barely a whisper.

An tAthair Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire was born in 1915. In 1975, he compiled an in-depth collection of prayers and blessings from the

oral Irish tradition, *Ár bPaidreacha Dúchais*, a book which has run into four editions. The prayers contained within this corpus are simple. Some are short, while others are some twenty verses long (e.g. *Caoineadh Mhuire: Mary's Lament*).² Throughout the book, the prayers resemble conversations with God, Holy Mary and the Irish saints. The angels (including one's guardian angel), St Joseph, the Holy Trinity and the Holy Family are all invoked. The prayers are dignified, lively and deeply spiritual. From the very moment of waking in the morning, God is present and the compilation includes prayers that cater for occasions of all kinds: grace before and after meals, going to Mass, going into the church, prayers for every part of the Mass and prayers for Confession. Then there are the social prayers, for making the bed, lighting the fire, going to work, doing work, travelling by foot, sea or river, crossing a bridge, protection against drowning, going fishing, mending the line, when the cock crows, making bread, before taking snuff at a wake, lighting a candle,



High cross and round tower, Monasterboice, Co. Louth

blowing out a candle and seeing a new moon. There are extra prayers for the Rosary, both before and after, which were often called 'the trimmings'.

The heart of the country placed God at its very centre. The Irish people displayed a great understanding of Christ's Passion and the Mass. Sunday was the gold in the week: 'Ba é an Domhnach "ceann óir" na seachtaine'.³ However, the Penal Laws had made it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to attend Mass; therefore, family life flourished around devotion to Mary and the Rosary. This is reflected in Ó Laoghaire's research, where the longest section in his book is devoted to Mary.

Many of the prayers so dear to the Irish were also hymns: *Caoineadh Mhuire*,⁴ *Críost Liom* (Christ with me),⁵ *A Mhuire na ngrás* (Mother of grace)⁶ and *Bí a Íosa i m'chroíse* (Jesus be in my heart).⁷ Some traditional Irish music is so solemn that it lent itself well to having the words of the prayers superimposed onto the already familiar melodies. A good example of this is *Úna Bhán*, a sad love song.⁸ This tune is used for the hymn *A Dhia Ghealghil*, which is a cry from the people to 'stiúraigh choich ár shaol' (always guide our lives) by the cross.⁹ The following beautiful hymn¹⁰ gives an account of the apparitions at Knock and pleads with Mary to fill our hearts with love from day to day:



A Mhuire Máthair, A Mhuire Ógh (Mary Mother, Virgin Mary)
A Mhuire Máthair, A Mhuire Ógh a bhí i láthair i gcnoc fadó (Mary Mother who was present at Knock long ago)
Le Íosaf Naofa sna tAspal Eoin (With St Joseph and the Apostle John)
Líon le grá sinn ó ló go ló, Líon le grá sinn ó ló go ló (Fill us with love from day to day)
A Mhuire tháinig go cnoc fadó (Mary who came to Knock long ago)

Is gin gan smál thú rug Slánaitheoir (You are the Immaculate who bore the Saviour)
A d'fhulaing Páis dúinn ar chrois dá dheóin (Who suffered the Passion on the cross for us)
Den uile grásta 's tú tobar beo (Give us grace, you who are the living well)
Líon le grá sinn ó ló go ló, Líon le grá sinn ó ló go ló (Fill us with love...)
A Mhuire tháinig go cnoc fadó

Táimid cráite 's go mór faoi bhrón (I am worn and full of sadness)
Is táimid báite i gCrois dá dheóin (I am drowning with tears of the Cross)
A Mhac taispeáin dúinn is tabhair dúinn treoir (Son show us and lead us)
Is Líon le grá sinn ó ló go ló, Líon le grá sinn ó ló go ló (Fill us with love....)
A Mhuire tháinig go cnoc fadó.

Some of the shorter aspirations and prayers, which were commonplace in conversational Irish, have also passed into the English language in Ireland, as well as in areas where the Irish settled: 'God bless', 'God help us' or 'God save us from all harm'. They are popular even today in spoken Irish and can be heard on *Raidió na Gaeltachta*, with some presenters from Donegal, Galway and Kerry naturally interweaving language and faith. For instance, '*Dia duit*' (God be with you) is used as a greeting to say hello and the reply is '*Dia is Muire duit*' (God and Mary be with you). In times past, the usual response to this was '*Dia is Muire duit is Pádraig*' (God, Mary and Patrick be with you), while the full greeting, '*Dia is Muire, is Pádraig, is Bríd, is Colm Cille is Gobnait na Cille*', listed more early Irish saints: Brigid, Colmcille and

Gobnait.¹¹ The normal reaction to someone sneezing is '*Dia linn*' (God bless you) or '*Dia is Muire linn*' (God and Mary bless you).¹² The following are also common Irish greetings and sayings and are beautiful examples of the practical faith of the Irish people:

Bail ó Dhia ort
 (God bless you)

Bail ó Dhia ar an obair
 (God bless the work)

Go maithe Dia dó é
 (That God would forgive him / God would make him good)¹³

Gach ní ar Do shonsa
 (Everything for You)

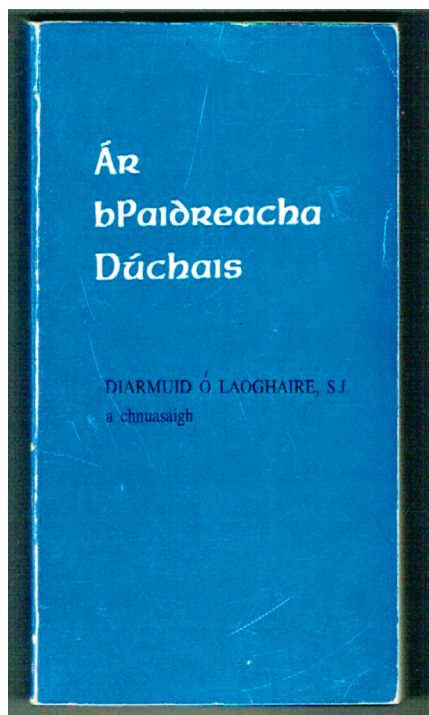


Tá Dia láidir is Máthair mhaith Aige
 (God is strong with a good mother)¹⁴

A Thiarna, Beannaigh gach duine a chasann orm inniu
 (Lord bless everyone I meet today)¹⁵

In the lattermost saying, the Irish word '*chasann*' from the verb '*cas*' also means to turn on someone; so, we ask God to bless the person that may attack or turn

on us, anticipating we may meet someone good or bad. As we have seen from the above examples, God and His Blessed Mother were never excluded from conversation. In the past, a poem or song written without some mention of God, Our Lady, a prominent Irish saint or indeed a lesser-known local saint may not have received much attention.



Every Irish-speaking household should have a copy of *An tAthair* Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire's lovely Irish prayer book, a true record of, and witness to, the Faith of our ancestors. We can draw strength from these prayers especially in these modern secular times. For centuries our Irish Catholic forefathers wove the riches of an ardent faith into the very ordinary fabric of their everyday lives. In their coming and going, their work and play, their language and proverbs, they displayed, in a very natural way, what was so much a part of

themselves and their history. May we continue to rise with God, with the Faith of our ancestors as our beacon. *Go neiri Dia linn.*

ENDNOTES

¹ Ó Laoghaire, D. 1975. *Ár bPáidreacha Dúchais*. Baile Átha Cliath, p. 6, no. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 209, no. 501.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xxxvi ('ceann óir').

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209, no. 501.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143, no. 375.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 191, no. 468.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59, no. 162 (*Roimh Obair*: said before work).

⁸ Ó Baoill, S. Ó. agus Ó Baoill, M. 1975. *Ceolta Gael 1*. Corcaigh.

⁹ *A Dhia Ghealghíl* was composed by Míne Uí Chribín.

¹⁰ *A Mhuire Máthair* was composed by Míne Uí Chribín.

¹¹ *Ón mbéaloidis* (from oral folklore).

¹² Ó Laoghaire, *Ár bPáidreacha Dúchais*, p. 253, no. 378.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 50, no. 355.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁵ A suggested aspiration from Fr Cunningham, Cashel, translated to Irish.





The Angelus - An Irish Perspective

Gerard Brady

*Those evening bells! Those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time,
When last I heard their soothing chime.¹*
(Thomas Moore)

I was waiting with my mother for a bus outside the old pub formerly known as Murphy's, in the village of Saggart, in south County Dublin. Though the bus stop has not moved, the building is now boarded up and derelict. I was a youngster of ten or thereabouts, and was about to return to the neighbouring village where we lived following a visit to the parish church or graveyard, or after calling on a relative. As we stood there waiting, a man emerged from the pub's doorway and leaned against the wall. I recognised him immediately. He was a local character known for his eccentricity and his fondness for the drink. He was often seen wandering around aimlessly, shooting at passers-by with his fingers. He lived near our village, alone in a tiny house; school children like myself were either wary of him or made fun of him.

It was six o'clock and the Angelus bell now pealed out from St Mary's, two-hundred yards from the bus stop. The man suddenly stood erect and began to say the ancient prayer. My mother was not one for displays, so while we always said the Angelus in our own house, on this occasion, we stood there mute while I watched this man genuflect, bless himself and then resume his previous insouciant pose. My mother commented loudly enough to be heard, 'there's a man who knows how to say his prayers'. My mother was not one to be easily impressed and her observation made a mark on me. Forty years have passed and I think it unlikely that anybody would witness a similar scene nowadays.

Anyone growing up in Ireland from 1950 onwards will be familiar with the twice-daily peal of bells at midday and 6 pm, calling on people to recite the venerable prayer in honour of Our Lady. In 1950, Archbishop McQuaid proposed to *Raidió Éireann* that the Angelus be rung twice daily on the airwaves to mark the Holy Year. This proved so popular (the country then still Catholic) that the national broadcaster decided that this practice should continue.

When television broadcasts began in the following decade, the devotion was continued on this new medium.

The Angelus is a very ancient and much indulged prayer and was popular in peasant society where it marked the time for dinner at noon and the end of the work day at 6pm, at least during winter months when work was hampered by short-lit days. One is reminded of Jean-François Millet's mid-19th-century painting, 'L'Angelus', depicting a male and female labourer in a field pausing in prayer. The Catholic Encyclopedia describes the Angelus as,

... a short practice of devotion in honour of the Incarnation repeated three times each day, morning, noon, and evening, at

the sound of the bell. It consists essentially in the triple repetition of the Hail Mary, to which in later times have been added three introductory versicles and a concluding versicle and prayer. The prayer is that which belongs to the antiphon of Our Lady, "Alma Redemptoris," and its recitation is not of strict obligation in order to gain the indulgence. From the first word of the three versicles, i.e. Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariæ (The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary) the devotion derives its name. The indulgence of 100 days for each recitation, with a plenary once a month was granted



'The Angelus' Jean-François Millet



by Benedict XIII, 14 September, 1724, but the conditions prescribed have been somewhat modified by Leo XIII, 3 April, 1884. Originally it was necessary that the Angelus should be said kneeling (except on Sundays and on Saturday evenings, when the rubrics prescribe a standing posture), and also that it should be said at the sound of the bell; but more recent legislation allows these conditions to be dispensed with for any sufficient reason, provided the prayer be said approximately at the proper hours, i.e. in the early morning, or about the hour of noon, or towards evening.²

That agonising funeral march – the Irish State’s slow collapse into national apostasy – has been reflected in the short space occupied by the Angelus and other ‘religious’ offerings in the national television and radio programming schedules. The perfect storm – that concatenation of events and personalities that led to theological collapse post Vatican II – combined with the spirit of the age, as well as rapid and unprecedented material progress, reduced a people which had steadfastly withstood the economic and political slings, arrows and vagaries of history, to material agnostics and atheists in the space of a generation. The shift

in the presentation of the Angelus on television from an obviously Catholic devotion to an anodyne ‘spiritual’ pause for reflection, mirrors the change within Irish society. While for many years a painting of the Annunciation had provided a most suitable backdrop to the solemnity of the Angelus bell, this had, in recent times, given way to a more secular approach. The bells were now accompanied by short clips of Irish people pausing to reflect, interspersed with some religious iconography.

After last year’s referendum on the removal of blasphemy from the Irish constitution, RTÉ held an exit poll asking, ‘Should RTÉ stop or should it keep broadcasting the Angelus?’ At 68%, over two-thirds said it should be kept, 21% said it should be stopped and 11% refused to answer.³ I fear this may be somewhat less encouraging than appearances initially suggest. The depth of general ignorance regarding the Angelus is suitably and light-heartedly illustrated by the tale told of the priest who asks a male penitent if he knows the prayer. Yes, says the penitent so the priest gives him the aforementioned prayer for a penance. As the priest sits quietly in the confessional, he hears his erstwhile penitent intone ‘Bong ... Bong ... Bong!’

Catholic families faithful to the traditions of the Church will, I have no doubt, keep this wonderful devotion and ensure its survival into the future. Devotion



to Our Lady will always be an antidote for the heresies which inevitably arise, and the Angelus will remain for Christ’s faithful remnant a reminder, a balm and a consolation.

ENDNOTES

¹ Moore, T. 1818. ‘Those evening bells’. In J. Stevenson and T. Moore *A Selection of Popular National Airs*. London, p. 19.

² *Catholic Encyclopedia*, at A > ‘Angelus’, available to view online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01486b.htm>.

³ ‘More than two thirds of voters want to keep the Angelus’. *The Journal.ie*, available to view at <https://www.thejournal.ie/angelus-exit-poll-4309296-Oct2018/>



New Pages for the Eucharistic Crusade



Eucharistic Crusade Outing on 2nd February.



Youth Group Outing - December



St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Athlone



Mr. Niall Bergin and Mr. Joseph Budds receive the cassock on 2nd February



Visiting Little Nellie's grave in Cork

Calendar of Events

April

- 13 Young Adult Study Session
- 21 Easter
- 27 - 28 Young Adult Outing

May

- 4 Eucharistic Crusade National Outing
- 9 Homeschool Day – Athlone
- 11-12 Marriage Conferences by Fr Grün (Dun Laoghaire & Cork)
- 25 Young Adult Outing

June

- 8-9 ACSS Outing and Enrolment Ceremony in Cork
- 15 Recollection for all Confirmands in Dun Laoghaire
- 22 Confirmations in Dun Laoghaire
- 24-29 Youth Formation Camp

July

- 13 Croagh Patrick Pilgrimage
- 21-28 Girls' Camp
- 28-3 Aug Boys' Camp

August

- 8-10 St Declan's Way Pilgrimage
- 24-25 Young Adult Outing



Priestly Society of Saint Pius X in Ireland

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Saint Pius X House (District House)

12 Tivoli Terrace S, Dún Laoghaire
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Resident:

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Rev. Fr. Francis Gallagher
Rev. Fr. Marcel Ockerse

ATHLONE Corpus Christi Church

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Co. Westmeath N37 E671
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Saint Joseph's House

Court Devenish House, Athlone,
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Resident:

Rev. Fr. Leo Boyle
Rev. Fr. Patrick Kimball

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Co. Cork T23 T389
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NEWRY Our Lady of Knock Chapel

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Newry, Co. Down BT35 7DT
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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.