

Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X



## In Principio

Teaching All Nations



...teach ye all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. ( Mt : 19 – 20 )

Painting: Nozzi Gozzoli, Procession of the Magi (Eastern Wall) (1459 – 1461)



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# In Principio

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# Superior's Letter

Rev. Fr Robert Brucciani, District Superior

My dear faithful,

The world is in the throes of a revolution. It is a communist revolution which is enslaving the entire planet to a global superstate in every domain: intellectual, political, economic, cultural and religious. This might be considered an exaggerated claim, but the similarities between the oppression of the Chinese people by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from 1949 onwards and the oppression we are witnessing today by national governments acting in unison are enough to make one believe that history is repeating itself on a global scale.

The CCP started with the destruction of the natural

order of society; it imposed its ideology and instilled fear in the whole population by ever-changing laws, threats, and arbitrary arrests. It declared whole classes (landowners, businessmen, intellectuals, the entire middleclass) as enemies of the CCP and dispossessed them. It even dispossessed the peasants. It destroyed independent enterprise and wealth. It tortured and killed as many as 60 million souls in its prisons and labour-camps and killed as many babies as it could in its population control programme. It also brutally persecuted Catholics with a view to replacing the Catholic Church with the CCP-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA).

History appears to be repeating itself on the world stage. All the elements are there in modern guise: destruction of the family by feminism, the sexual revolution, divorce and gender ideology; dispossession of the working and middle classes by debt; promotion of the culture of death in all its forms; the growing prospect of criminalisation of the beliefs of the Catholic faith and betrayal by members of the Catholic hierarchy who would have the Church become a global version of the CCPA.

If indeed we are in a global revolution like the Chinese Revolution, our Catholic response should look to the Catholic heroes and saints of the Chinese Revolution. In China, the faithful Catholics ran to Our Lady when they were threatened: they recited her rosary in the absence of Mass, and joined her Legion in the absence of a parish structure. Rosaries were the weapons, the Legion of Mary was the army.

Brought to China by Fr. Aedan McGrath of the Missionary Society of St. Columban in 1931, the Legion of Mary became an instrument of survival of the Catholic Church when the hierarchy was dismantled

by the CCP between 1950 and 1955. It gave to Catholics a formation that would help them both endure the suffering of persecution and spread the faith to other afflicted souls who, stripped of the distractions of the material world, were fertile ground for the divine life.

This chronology tells the story of persecution and survival under the mantle of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**1917** Communist Revolution in Russia; Apparition of the BVM in Fatima warning that Russia would spread its errors throughout the world.

**1921** The Legion of Mary was founded by Frank Duff in Dublin and grew rapidly.

**1928** Mao Tse-Tung set up a Communist government at Hankow in 1928 and began to slowly take over the country by means of civil war.

**1930** Fr. Aedan McGrath, a Dubliner with the Missionary Society of St. Columban, was sent to China in 1930 to a parish, in Tsien-Kiang with neither church nor presbytery, with 24 mission chapels and no means of transport except his own two feet. After the first year, when Fr. McGrath pleaded for help in his mission, he was given a Legion Handbook



by Bishop Galvin (a co-founder of the Columban Fathers) and dutifully founded a praesidium. He admitted that he did not expect great things of the Legion at the time, but events unfolded to change his mind.

**1931** The Japanese army invaded Manchuria.

**1936** Edel Quinn was sent as Envoy of the Legion of Mary to Africa and met with astonishing success on account of the modus operandi of the Legion and her heroic labours. Archbishop Riberi, the Apostolic Nuncio in Nairobi

at the time saw in the legion a powerful apostolic which was able to function in the absence of clergy or religious.

**1938-40** The Japanese army occupied Tsien-Kiang and forced Fr. McGrath to leave his parish for two and a half years before letting him return, whereupon, to his surprise, he found that the Legion of Mary had flourished in his absence: baptising, catechising, witnessing marriages, performing burials. By 1943, Fr. McGrath had 6 praesidia and 700 adult converts.

**1946** Archbishop Riberi was appointed Internuncio to China in 1946.

**1948** With the cumulating victories of the communists, Archbishop Riberi could foresee a terrible persecution of the Church and commanded Fr. McGrath to expand the Legion throughout China. Within one year there were 1,000 praesidia. Within two years, 2,000.

**1949** Chairman Mao Tse-Tung announced the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1st October 1949 before a massive crowd assembled at Tiananmen Square. There were then in China 4 million Catholics, 3,080 foreign priests, 2,351 foreign sisters, 2,557 Chinese priests and 5,112 Chinese sisters.



The Legion of Mary emblem

**1950** The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) announced their intention to establish a church loyal to the CCP rather than to Rome.

**1951** Fr. McGrath disbanded the Legion for the safety of the Legionaries, but many members continued their prayers and their work as apostles in the world.

**8th October 1951**, the CCP declared that "The Legion of Mary is a Counter Revolutionary Organization. All the members

have to go to the Security Office to register." Few registered. Fear of arrest, torture, labour camps and execution was ever-present. Some kept a parcel of clothing and toiletries ready to grab in case of arrest.

**1951-55** Foreign priests, including Fr. McGrath, were arrested, imprisoned for 2-4 years and then deported. Fr. McGrath was imprisoned for 2 years mostly in solitary confinement. Chinese priests, sisters and legionaries were typically arrested, subject to repeated brainwashing, sometimes tortured, sent to labour camps in excess of 20 years or executed. Not all remained faithful. Meanwhile conversions continued – especially in the prisons.

**1955** The Bishop of Shanghai, Ignatius Kung Pinmei (1901-2000), was arrested along with the Bishops of Taizhou, Hankou, Guangzhou, and Baoding, and more than a thousand Catholics. They were imprisoned for long terms—Bishop Kung was imprisoned for 30 years—because of their loyalty to the pope

**1957** The CCP established the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA). In response, Pope Pius XII issued his encyclical, *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, on 29th July 1958, in which he condemned the activities



The Holy Rosary and the Brown Scapular

of the CCPA and declared bishops who participated in consecrating new bishops selected by the CCPA to be excommunicated.

**1966-76** The Cultural Revolution was orchestrated by Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, and Catholic priests, nuns, faithful, and churches were attacked by communist youth called “Red Guards.” Churches were gutted of their religious symbolism, seized by the government, and refurbished for secular uses. Unknown thousands of Catholics

were imprisoned, executed, or sent to labour camps.

**1976-2018** The CCP continued to arrest Catholic bishops, religious and faithful. It continued the demolition or confiscation of churches and the removal of religious symbols.

**2018** Pope Francis signed an agreement with the CCP brokered by the disgraced Cardinal McCarrick by which Rome recognises the bishops of the CCPA (without lifting their excommunications and without their obedience to the pope). Loyal underground Catholic clergy

and faithful are now expected to follow the bishops of the CCPA.

**2018-2020** The persecution of Catholics intensified with no protest from the Vatican. The provisional agreement between Rome and the CCP was renewed in 2020.

As the persecution of the Church intensifies in both China and throughout the world in our present day, the wisdom of Archbishop Riberi and the zeal of Fr. Aedan McGrath need to be replicated. It would seem that now is the time to spread the Legion in earnest once again, for it is not difficult to discern a concerted effort by the state to limit and even forbid public worship in the future. The dark forces at work clearly want to stop the Mass and stop the sacraments, for they want to stop the flow of supernatural grace at its source.

Perhaps we need to adapt the Legion to modern conditions by holding praesidia meetings online or by exploiting apostolic

opportunities in cyberspace. Why must we leave this powerful tool of communication to the enemy? Most certainly, we need to do something to prepare for battle right now: first interiorly and then in the field.

In spite of this sobering message, I wish you every grace and peace this Christmas. As Catholics, we can have peace even in the midst of battle because with Our Lady, we have the same protectress as the Child Jesus who was also born into a hostile world too. With her Rosary, Scapular and Miraculous Medal we have our sword, breastplate and helmet with which to face the enemy. Do not forget the Rosary Crusade for the liberation of the Mass and for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It really is in earnest now.

May God bless you all.  
In Jesu et Maria,  
Rev. Robert Brucciani.



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# A Reflection on the Lives of Saint Killian and Saint Colmcille

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Kelly Murphy Bannwart

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## Saint Killian : The Patron Saint of Wurzburg

Saint Killian (Cillíne in the old Irish) was born in southern County Cavan, near to the County Meath border. While there are varying opinions as to the actual date and location of his birth in the 7th century, 640 AD is the year generally accepted. Saint Killian was an apostle to Franconia. He was known for his genuine piety and his love of the life of study. He had been ordained a bishop by the time that he left Ireland for Continental Europe with 11 companions.

Saint Killian is perhaps best known for evangelising Wurzburg in Germany where he received papal approval for his mission work. While Wurzburg served as the centre of this work, by 686 the saint was also working to evangelise territories in East Franconia and Thuringia. He was aided in evangelising these areas by a faithful priest named Coloman and by a deacon by the name of Totnan.

God blessed Saint Killian's work with the conversion to Christianity of the pagan Thuringian-Frankish duke, Duke Gozbert. Many of the duke's subjects followed suit, converting to Christianity *en masse*. Around the time of the duke's conversion, Saint Killian



St. Killian's Church, Mullagh Co. Mayo

admonished him for contracting an invalid marriage with his brother's widow.

He counselled the duke to separate from this unlawful wife, Geilana, in order to remedy the offence committed against holy matrimony. Geilana was enraged at this and quickly arranged for the murder of Saint Killian and his companions, Coloman and Totnan. The murders are believed to have been arranged to take place at a time and place when the attack on the holy men would escape the observation of the duke. Around July of 689, Saint Killian, Coloman and Totnan, were murdered and buried at the site where they were slain. The men were buried along with their 'sacred vessels,

vestments and holy writings'. Geilana vehemently denied any involvement in the murders. Both Geilana and the assassin who murdered the three holy men eventually went mad and died in a state of inconsolable insanity.

Geilana's murder of Saint Killian and his companions brings to mind the wicked actions of Queen Jezebel in the Old Testament, who hunted and killed the prophets of God in her quest to spread the worship of false gods throughout Israel. As we continue to do battle in a society ever increasing in wickedness and disdain for the reign of Christ the King, let us never forget the example of Saint Killian and his companions who spoke the truth despite the cost.



View from Old Main Bridge in Würzburg towards Festung Marienberg. St Killien in front with his golden sword.

Lutz.marten, CC BY-SA 3.0

The three martyrs, also known as ‘the three Apostles of Franconia’, left an indelible mark on the world by their zeal for the salvation of souls, their courage in the face of persecution and their perseverance in prayer and fasting. Many miracles are associated with the relics of the three martyrs. Saint Killian continues to be revered as the Patron Saint of Würzburg in Germany. An annual festival is held in his honour in the capital of Franconia near northern Bavaria.

The following words of Cardinal O’ Fiach should resonate with the faithful today.

*May we imitate Killian today by our burning zeal to spread Christ’s gospel, by our unshakeable courage in standing up to neo-paganism and permissiveness, by our acceptance of prayer and penance on the road to Heaven.*

Saint Killian, pray for us.

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## Saint Colmcille: The Warrior Saint

Saint Colum Cille (or Columba) was born in Gartan, County Donegal in the 6th century around the year 520 or 521. The name Colmcille or Colum Cille means ‘the dove of the Church’ in Irish. The appellation ‘dove’ is, in Colmcille’s case, both a fitting description and a paradox. While the saint proclaimed the truth and the peace of Christ, he has also been described by the Abbot Cumméne in 669 as a ‘tall and striking figure with a commanding presence and ferocious temper’. The abbot goes on to describe the saint as a ‘stern monastic governor, ecclesiastical scholar and poet’. The seeming paradox of the saint’s temperament can

be reconciled in consideration of Our Lord’s admonishment to the disciples to be both ‘wise as serpents and simple as doves’.

The departure of Saint Colmcille from Ireland came about in the aftermath of a bloody battle with Diarmait, the High King. Saint Colmcille found himself in a sharp dispute with Saint Finnian after Colmcille was charged with copying a manuscript of the Psalms, which Saint Finnian had brought back from Italy. The dispute was brought before the high arbitration court. The High King Diarmait ruled, finding Saint Colmcille at fault as he had not secured permission to copy the manuscript. Indignant at the king’s ruling, Saint Colmcille gathered his kinsmen from Ulster and waged a battle against King Diarmait

View of Iona from the sea Lesbardd, CC BY-SA 4.0SA 4.0







in County Sligo at the Battle of Culdremna. Approximately 30,000 men were slain in the course of the battle. Saint Colmcille was deeply moved by grief and remorse as he surveyed the wreckage caused by his pride and obstinance. His confessor, Saint Molaise, prescribed a permanent departure from Ireland for Saint Colmcille as penance for his sins.

Saint Colmcille was forty-two years of age when he left Ireland for the island of Iona in 562. Colmcille set to work with indefatigable determination, founding monasteries in Campus Lunge, Hinba and Inverness. Saint Colmcille was descended from the Irish dynasty, Cenél Conaill, a branch of the Uí Néill. The saint used his noble standing in the line of Cenél Conaill for the glory of God, exploiting it wisely to bring about the advancement of monastic rule and evangelisation

Although a powerful figure of a man, the genuine piety and kindness of the saint could be sensed by all. Tradition holds that an old horse that was used to transport supplies to and from the monastery came and laid his head on Saint Colmcille's breast. Moved with pity for the poor creature, Saint Colmcille rebuked

the servant who soon came to chase the horse away saying, 'leave him be, for he loves me'. This same horse came to Saint Colmcille the day that the saint was to die, placing his head on the saint's breast for the last time and weeping for his coming death. Saint Colmcille died near to the foot of the altar while praying the midnight office.

By the time of his death he had successfully converted many of the pagans from the mainland to Christianity and had preached the gospel throughout much of Scotland. The monastery he founded at Iona was the first Irish monastery to be violently attacked and pillaged by the Vikings in 795

Saint Colmcille is revered as the 'warrior saint'. His intercession and aid has often been invoked in battle in both Scotland and Ireland. His life of repentance and service to God is an inspiration to all who claim the Cross of Christ. May we be granted the grace to emulate Saint Colmcille's commitment to a life of penance as we seek to live out the gospel and advance the rule of Christ the King on earth.

Saint Colmcille, pray for us.

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# “Domine, ut videam”: The Life and Vision of Bishop Joseph Shanahan CSSp.

Fr Francis Gallagher

## *Early Life.*

Joseph Shanahan was born in Glankeen Co Tipperary, a place with strong Catholic traditions on 6 June 1871.

Joseph was proud of his father who despite his interest in politics saw the remedy for Ireland’s ills in education rather than agitation. He passed on this concern to his son. Inspired by his mother Joseph wrote: ‘God’s life is revealed to us in the hearts and lives of our mothers...’(1) Every night there was the family rosary followed by prayers and readings.

## *Studies.*

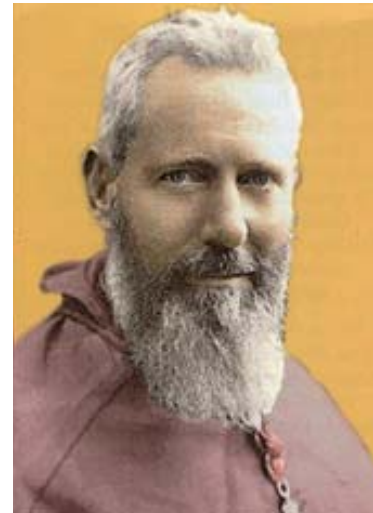
Aged twelve Joseph entered Rockwell College near Cashel. It was founded by the Holy Ghost

Fathers in 1864. Archbishop Lefebvre, then Superior General of the Spiritans, was present for the 1964 centenary celebrations. Joseph was probably influenced in his decision to enter by the presence there of his uncle, a former missionary brother.

Aged only thirteen, he went to study for twelve years in France. While there he was influenced by the writings of Venerable Francis Libermann CSSp. . His years there did much to prepare him for his missionary work.

## *His Work Begins*

Shanahan was ordained at Blackrock College in 1898. He was then assigned as a teacher to Rockwell. He had a lasting



Bishop Joseph Shanahan 1871 – 1943

influence on his students. He was himself greatly influenced by a talk given there by a missionary on his work in western Africa. He volunteered to work there and was sent to southern Nigeria, a place where many missionaries did not survive long. (Archbishop Lefebvre would later improve the living conditions of missionaries in Africa). Later Fr. Shanahan was appointed Prefect Apostolic for this region.

## *The Schools.*

Soon he concluded that he could only reach the people by

establishing schools, hoping that the children would bring the true Faith to their pagan homes. Like St. Patrick, he would often seek the aid of the local chieftains. Many of these were converted.

Of his teachers he said: ‘If it had not been for their devotedness, their zeal and their self sacrifice, the Fathers would have achieved very little. I salute them and pray God to reward them’.(2) Due to his own efforts the number of schools and of pupils increased enormously in a short time despite many difficulties.

## *The Need for Priests.*

In 1913 he returned to Ireland seeking priests to help him. He visited the Holy Father, St. Pius X, who received him warmly. According to his own account the Pope’s eyes glowed at the mention of the children as apostles. ‘At the end I knelt for his blessing. To my astonishment he was instantly on his knees beside me; his hands were on my shoulders, and his eyes, with tears plainly falling, were looking into mine. “Let us thank God together for what has been achieved in Nigeria”. We did so and he handed me his crucifix as we rose’.(3) When Shanahan expressed his desire for priests

the Pope told him to go to his Superior General. 'Tell him I sent you'.(4) However he was unable to get more priests for his beloved Ibo people despite his heartfelt pleas.

In 1918, with characteristic zeal for the salvation of souls, he began a one thousand mile trek lasting four months. After this he had to be hospitalised. He quickly resumed his work but he was greatly weakened.

He spent several months in a Dublin hospital in 1919-1920 and underwent a serious operation. In early 1920 he tried, again unsuccessfully, to get priests and nuns for Nigeria.

Then, persuaded by a friend, he visited the grave of St Therese of Lisieux and implored her aid. He was greatly impressed by the supernatural atmosphere there and by the saint's sisters whom he met later. One of them wrote to him later saying: 'I am sure my little sister will obtain your requests'.(5)

#### *The Bishop*

And so she did. On the occasion of his ordination as Ireland's first Spiritan bishop in Maynooth he spoke to the Irish bishops and to

the students there concerning his plans to have diocesan priests spend some time in Nigeria. The response was positive. Some priests who volunteered formed St. Patrick's Missionary Society popularly known as The Kiltegan Fathers. Shanahan was ordained bishop on 6 June 1920, his 49th birthday. The new bishop received a tumultuous welcome back in Nigeria. The numbers of catechumens and mission stations continued to grow. So also did the number of motorcycles much to the dismay of some! When Shanahan later mentioned this to Pope Pius XI the response was: 'nothing could be too modern on a mission in the 20th century; if you have motor-cycles, look forward to cars; when you get cars, think of airplanes; all the time, think of souls'.(6)

In 1922 Shanahan's sight began to decline and he had to return to Ireland for treatment. This would be a heavy cross. His episcopal motto was: 'Domine ut videam – Lord, that I might see'. He wanted, for himself and others, to see all things through the eyes of Christ.

#### *The Holy Rosary Sisters.*

From the beginning Bishop Shanahan had seen the plight

of the women in Nigeria and the need for missionary sisters. He had some vocations among women who had been in Nigeria. They became known as: 'The Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary'. In one of his addresses to them he said: 'The Catholic Sister is the highest type of Christian womanhood. She is to express in her person, in her life, in her thoughts and in her actions the living type of the supernatural woman - the woman who has our Blessed Mother as model of her divinized womanhood'.(7) He impressed upon them the need to treat the Africans with courtesy and respect.

#### *God Glorified.*

The overriding aim in Bishop Shanahan's life was to glorify God. He saw his missionary work as enabling others to do likewise. The means to do this was the divinisation of humankind. 'We must make God known by being Christ-like during our short span of existence in this world' he wrote.

Indeed during his last years he grew ever more Christlike. He still yearned to see more missionaries coming to his aid. Eventually his declining health forced his return to Ireland in 1932. Despite

advancing blindness he still said Mass. He asked the Divine Child to come for him on Christmas Day. This He did on Christmas Day 1943. In 1956 Bishop Shanahan's remains were brought to the Cathedral Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity in Onitsha, Nigeria. He can certainly be numbered with men like Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and Bishop Edward Galvin as a truly great missionary bishop.

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# "God's will be done": Bishop Edward Galvin and the Maynooth Mission to China

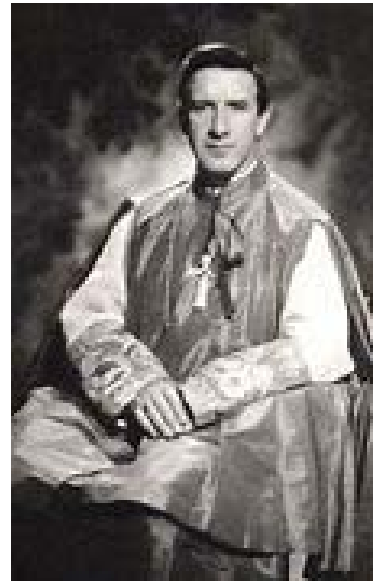
Liam Foley

*The impression that remains with me is of a man of evangelical simplicity which hid great spiritual power. He was simplicity itself and humility itself. But while you meet many people who are simple people, you do not meet many who manifest the spiritual power that he did. In himself he was not an impressive man and he wasn't impressive except to those who were interested in spiritual things. He is not a man who can be written great; he has to be seen great. He was the type of man who could be a saint because he was not conscious of being saintly. In a bench of bishops he would not be the 'outstanding bishop', because he fools you, as a saint should fool you. There was the same disproportion between the man and the results which he achieved as there is between the hem of Our Lord's garment and the cure that was worked in the woman who touched it. I wonder if anyone in a lifetime had such spiritual filiation. There are few founders who have such progeny in their generation. - Fulton Sheen.*

While the eyes of the world follow China as a wielder of hard economic and military power, the eyes of Catholics continue to follow her as a vast country with a long history of receiving Catholic missionaries and attempting to inculturate them; first with the 17th-century Chinese Rites Controversy and

more recently with the so-called Patriotic Catholic Association which attempts state control over Catholics with Rome's blessing. In the Catholic history of China, however, there is a place for a modest Cork man by the name of Bishop Edward Galvin.

Born in 1882 on the feast of St



Bishop Galvin official photo

Columban and the eldest of nine children, Edward Galvin was much like most of his peers in late 19th century Ireland. A gifted child, after he revealed that he felt a call to the priesthood, he was sent to the diocesan seminary. Inspired by Gregory XVI's Encyclical, *Probe Nostis* (1840), the first great call in modern times for missionaries to go to the most difficult parts of the world, he told his father he wanted to go to All Hallows. His father objected, no doubt out of a natural desire to keep his eldest child close to him. Edward bowed in obedience to his father's

wishes. He entered Maynooth and was ordained in 1909 for the diocese of Cork. Only three months before ordination day, his father died suddenly. After ordination Fr Galvin was sent on loan to Brooklyn. It was not exactly Africa or Asia, as he desired, but it was a taste of things to come.

After three years in Brooklyn, the desire to go to China had not left Fr Galvin. On one morning in January 1912, he resolved to go to the New York offices of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Several sick calls prevented him from doing so. It was a weary and disappointed Fr Galvin that instead went to his afternoon meal that day to be introduced to Fr John Fraser, a missionary to China. Despite a less than warm reception by Fr Fraser, Fr Galvin resolved that day to go to China and wrote to his bishop in Cork seeking permission. After a tense few weeks, a letter returned from Bishop O'Callaghan granting his approval. In 1912 Fr Galvin arrived in China.

Fr Galvin had an immense talent for languages and after just a short few months in China he had acquired enough Chinese to preach and hear confessions in the language of his new home. The first great challenge came at the outbreak of World War I



Bishop Edward Galvin 1882 - 1956

when many of the local French missionaries were called for military service by the anti-clerical government of the day. In 1915, after an extensive letter-writing campaign, he managed to persuade two more Irish priests to come to China. A year later, with the situation in China remaining grim Fr Galvin felt God was calling him to return to Ireland in person to find priests willing to answer the missionary calling, far from their native land.

Ireland in 1916 was a tense place but Fr Galvin found in Dr Cohalan, Bishop of Cork, a man supportive of his ideas. After a brief visit to his family, Fr Galvin

was also introduced to Cardinal Logue. One of the priests he met and spoke with on this visit was a Fr Blowick, a professor of Theology in Maynooth. Fr Blowick was in every way different to Fr Galvin, intellectual and sensitive, without Fr Galvin's imposing physical stature. However, they immediately clicked and found that together they made a formidable pair. What they shared was a zeal for souls and the courageous heart of the true missionary priest. The idea emerged of a brand new missionary society, a more stable way of recruiting and training men, rather than enticing seminarians already studying,

or priests already ordained. At a meeting in October of that year, the Irish bishops gave their blessing and approval to a new missionary society that would send priests to China. In time, the Missionary Society of St Columban would gain not just Irish members but members from English speaking countries across the world.

In the Summer of 1917 the pair went to Rome to conduct the formalities of setting up a missionary society with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. This was an area where Fr Blowick excelled. He was a man who knew how the Church functioned. After an audience with Pope Benedict XV, the Pope blessed their endeavour and with Rome's backing they returned to Ireland. Despite some early difficulties, there was no shortage either of priests ready to join the society, or of people who were willing to give all that they had saved to its work.

Near Shrulle in Mayo they found a house, that, despite many drawbacks, became the first home of the new society. The house opened in January 1918. Later that year the Missionary Society of St Columba was officially erected by the Bishop of Galway.

In this period of establishment, Fr Galvin toured the United States looking for recruits and funds for the Society. In the same year, Pope Benedict issued his ground-breaking Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* on the role of the missions and missionaries. This was taken by Fr Galvin as a sign from God.

In 1920, after almost four years away, Fr Galvin returned to China as head of a new missionary society, bringing with him its first eleven members. When they landed in China they made their way to Wuhan, the jurisdiction given to them by Rome. The area was completely underdeveloped from a Catholic perspective. There was not one church building and only a tiny number of Catholics. Fr Galvin and his companions immediately threw themselves into the work of building up the Church in that part of China. Evangelising people as well as the practicalities of acquiring the necessary property and traversing Chinese bureaucracy was their daily work. Almost at once it was evident that it was necessary to recruit women to assist the priests by setting up schools and running dispensaries. Fr Galvin set about setting up what would become the Columban Sisters. The first few months of Fr Galvin's time



in China were marked by such highlights as the first baptism of a Chinese Catholic, a Mr Joseph Wang, and the devastating news of the death of his brother, an IRA member, in an ambush by Crown Forces. As the de facto leader of the new society in China it was up to Fr Galvin to visit his priests and get an idea of the health of their missionary work. This he often did on foot. His love and admiration for the Chinese people grew at this time and he offered them the greatest compliment he could when he told one of his brother priests, "A great people, ... They are like the Irish. When you've made Catholics out of them, you've made good Catholics<sup>1</sup>."

With the successes came many challenges. China in the 1920s was a very unstable country. It shared a border with the new Soviet Union and it was inevitable that Communism with its anti-clericalism would seep into China, creating even more instability in its wake. For a group of Irish priests in the early 1920s political instability was something they were used to but not on the scale Fr Galvin and his companions saw in China. As more priests arrived schools and churches had to be built and staffed. This required a tremendous faith in God and many material resources. Despite many

impending crises over money, providence always seemed to provide. As the decade progressed things got worse. Although they were told by Fr Galvin that they could leave, all his priests elected to stay in their adopted country.

As peace was returning to Ireland in 1921 news arrived that the plan to establish an order of Sisters was developing. Fr Blowick supervised this project, alongside the growing seminary in Dalgan. Some Irish Christian Brothers also arrived to establish schools for boys. All of this was made much easier by the establishment of the Vicariate of Hanyang. This would eventually become a diocese but the significance of it being established a vicariate, meant that the missionary society was now independent of the Italian Franciscans who had jurisdiction over that part of China. With the new vicariate came four young Chinese priests. Christmas 1921 was a time of great joy and Fr Galvin could write home that Midnight Mass could be offered for 400 people. The new society was beginning to take hold. 1922 brought other changes. In February Pope Pius XI was elected and in the same month the Columban Sisters were finally established. Later in the



Bishop Galvin on his release from China 1952, taken in Hong Kong

year the news arrived that the vicariate was to be raised to the status of prefecture apostolic. The exponential growth of the Church in China was seen with the consecration, by Pope Pius XI, of six Chinese born priests to the episcopacy in 1926.

Amidst the increasing political instability of China in 1927 came the news that Fr Galvin was named bishop of what was to be a Vicariate Apostolic, the last stage before his territory being raised to a diocese. Whilst some wanted him to consider consecration in Ireland, he preferred to be

consecrated in his adopted land. He was consecrated bishop in November that year at the hands of Archbishop (later to become Cardinal) Costantini with one of the co-consecrators being Bishop Tchen Hede, one of the six consecrated by Pius XI the previous year. As a bishop, Edward Galvin had a different set of responsibilities than as a parish priest and superior. He now carried a greater responsibility for his priests in a politically unstable country. Less than six months after consecration, one of his priests was kidnapped and tortured by bandits. Eventually the priest was saved by some of the local Catholics and returned to safety but this was a portent of things to come. First illness and then Communist bandits began to take the lives of some of his priests. They were the first of many Columbans who would give their lives for the building of God's Kingdom in China. Communist propaganda also made it difficult to reach some of the population who mistrusted the foreigners. Fr Leonard was surprised whilst offering Mass and had the ciborium snatched from him and the Blessed Sacrament profaned by the Communists. He was found "guilty" by his Communist judges and brutally murdered. The local





Catholics later made their way to the church where they consumed the Sacred hosts which had been trampled by the communists.

Alongside the difficulties of dealing with the Communists, the work of building up the Kingdom continued and many souls were won for Christ. Many new priests came to Bishop Galvin's territory and found themselves immediately given great responsibility. Fairly typical of Bishop Galvin's style was a significant incident recounted by Fr Aedan McGrath who arrived in China as a new priest in 1930. After labouring for a few years in a remote parish with few resources, Fr McGrath begged for help. The bishop sent him a book in return - the handbook for the Legion of Mary! Thus was launched Fr McGrath's great Legion of Mary apostolate in China<sup>2</sup>.

These great achievements, however, could not hide the fact that the "reds" were gaining in strength. Throughout his period in China, longer than any other Columban Father, Bishop Galvin combatted poverty, ignorance and always and everywhere he went - Communists.

By the late 1930s another peril plagued China. The Japanese

invaded in a bid to assert their power over the region. Their brutality matched that of the communists but exceeded it in scale. Massive displacements of people added to the difficulties in ministering to the spiritual and material needs of the people under the bishop's care. The coming of war between Japan and the Allies deprived Bishop Galvin of American, British and Commonwealth clergy and religious, leaving him with only Chinese and Irish men and women to cover his vast territory under Japanese occupation. With minimal contact with the outside world, wartime was a very lean period for Bishop Galvin and his fellow priests. Miraculously, however, even though much of the area around the mission compound of Hanyang was reduced to rubble, the cathedral and adjoining buildings were spared. There was no doubt in Bishop Galvin's mind; God had spared them, even if just for another few years.

Whilst the Japanese were driven out of China the communists were again gaining strength and were in the ascendancy. After the war there was a flow of men and women back to China. Some had returned from Japanese internment camps;

others were new missionaries whose arrival had been delayed by the war. The latter category included Fr Donal O'Mahony, the bishop's young nephew whom he hadn't seen in over twenty years. In 1950, with the outbreak of war in Korea, things began to get even more difficult for foreign missionaries in China. Events in Korea were to be a foretaste of things to come. Seven members of the Society were killed by Korean communists in the year the war broke out.

Gradually things began to unravel in China. The first to suffer were the Chinese religious and clergy who were targeted by the communists. The Chinese sisters had to disperse, and in 1951 Fr Joseph Seng was the first to give his life. A campaign of intimidation was carried out against Bishop Galvin and his priests but despite this they continued to minister to the faithful.

In September 1952 the bishop was summoned to the local police prefect and informed that he was to be expelled from China. He was charged with obstructing the establishment of an "independent" communist-controlled Church and the establishment of a reactionary organisation called the Legion

of Mary. Bishop Galvin was given little time to pack and was deprived of contact with any of his clergy or Catholic faithful. He was taken overland, a trip that took a day and a half, during which he was deprived of food and sleep, to British administered Hong Kong. A medical checkup in Hong Kong revealed that apart from suffering the consequences of many years of hardship, Bishop Galvin also had leukaemia. Despite making his way to freedom his thoughts were constantly with his brother priests left behind and the many Chinese priests, religious and faithful who had no other country. After some time in the United States, where he met Cardinal Spellman and Msgr. Fulton Sheen, he made his way back to Ireland.

In May 1954 Bishop Galvin returned to Ireland. Welcomed by family and his confreres it was clear that he was a broken man. The many years of hardship were now taking their toll. His health was deteriorating. Despite this, he kept up a tough schedule in talks about the missions. He maintained that as difficult as things were under the Japanese, even they were not as bad as the communists when it came to how they treated the missionaries. In the early morning of February

23rd 1956 Bishop Galvin passed away whilst being cared for by Mother Finbar, one of the first Columban Sisters, and two of his own priests. His old friend and co-founder, Fr Blowick, offered his Requiem Mass. In attendance were a number of Catholic Chinese students from UCD who brought with them some mourning scrolls, a final tribute to a man who had

spent most of his adult life building up the Kingdom of God in their native land.

NOTES:

1. Barrett William E. "The Red Lacquered Gate" Sheed and Ward, 1967, p.165
2. "The Legion of Mary in China" SSPX Asia Newsletter, October 2007 – March 2008

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## Calendar of Events Winter 2021\*

Jan	6	Feast of the Epiphany
	8-9	Young Adult Outing
	16	Conference for 3rd Orders & MI (live-streamed)
	23	Youth Study Session

Feb	1	St Brigid's Day
	8-13	Priests' Retreat in Bristol
	13-14	Young Adult Outing
	17	Ash Wednesday
	20	Conference for 3rd Orders & MI (live-streamed)

Mar	13	Young Adult Recollection
	17	St. Patrick's Day
	20	Conference for 3rd Order Members (live streamed)
	22-27	Passion Retreat (bristol)
	28	Palm Sunday

## THANK YOU

THE WINNER OF THE DRAW, PICKED BY FR ABBET  
IS MISS BERNADETTE Mc KEOWN

To all in Dublin, Cork, Athlone, Newry and Belfast  
who helped to sell "tickets" for the raffle of the  
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Thank you to all the generous people who contributed,  
with special thanks to those who made extremely generous donations.  
It is hoped that a Mass will be offered in the New Year  
for all your intentions.

## Priestly Society of Saint Pius X in Ireland

### DUBLIN St John the Evangelist Church

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

Mass Times  
- Sunday 9am and 11am  
- Monday - Friday 11am and 6:30pm most days  
- Saturday & Wednesday 11am only

### Saint Pius X House

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

### Resident:

Rev. Fr Patrick Abbet (Prior)  
Rev. Fr Leo Boyle  
Rev. Fr Patrick Kimball  
Rev. Fr Jules Dautreberte

### ATHLONE Corpus Christi Church

Connaught Gardens, Athlone  
Co. Westmeath N37 E671  
T: (01) 284 2206

Mass Times  
- Sunday 10am (check website, can be 4pm)  
- Monday & Saturday 10am  
- Friday 6:30pm

### BELFAST Saint Pius V Chapel

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

Mass Times  
- Sunday 12pm

### CORK Our Lady of the Rosary Church


Shanakiel Road Sunday's Well,  
Co. Cork T23 T389  
T: (01) 284 2206

Mass Times  
- Sunday 11am (check website, can be 4pm)  
- Saturday 11am

### NEWRY Our Lady of Knock Chapel

Unit 5 Richbrook Business Park,  
Mill Road, Bessbrook,  
Newry, Co. Down BT35 7DT  
T: (048) 30 825730

Mass Times  
- Sunday 8:30am



Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X

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

Since its foundation by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in 1970, the Society has formed priests according to the immemorial teachings of the Catholic Church. By offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the traditional Latin rite and administering the sacraments according to the traditional rites in vigour in 1962 (before the Second Vatican Council 1962-5), the Society's priests perpetuate what the Church has taught and done throughout its history. By the exercise of the teaching office of its priests, the Society fights against the errors that presently afflict the Church.

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