# GLOWING EMBERS Issue No. 5



Spiritan Mission Resource & Heritage Centre

August 2018

Welcoming Irish Spiritans Remembered Volume II

hese past three years spent compiling the 311 new entries for *Irish Spiritans Remembered Volume II* has been a privileged time. It has been an experience of being in the presence of wise elders who were co-creators of God's mission; their ambition to pass on the Christian faith through home, school, community and church.

The reading of letters, homilies and papers from the files of these wise elders makes you aware of their expansive vision; many were on a journey of seeking which led to wholeness and universality. Very often what is portrayed is a quality of faith which struggles towards growth and change. We witness many who may have once been rigid and staid enjoy an insight and wisdom which cherished flexibility and a more nuanced understanding. In the mellowness of elder years they detect and seek to celebrate the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst; men who found God in the ordinary.

These 311 profiles show men who cherished spirituality. There is a movement towards interiority and a valuing of stillness and silence. Very often the business of active missionary life gave way to inner exploration. Discernment and inspiration often replaced a former reliance on dogma, moral directive and clerical management.

Irish Spiritans Remembered shows us a group of Spiritans who connected and communicated broadly; who attended workshops and conferences and who were involved in social activism. It shows us men who were close to people; who were approachable and who followed love itself as the seed force of new birth both in their lives and in the world.

Scanning the CVs of these confrères and associates oneloses count of all the educational

awards; training and skills development, diplomas and degrees. In most cases these awards were never displayed; in fact you have to hunt them out. To my mind this shows how most Spiritans were keen on intellectual development rather than on academic



achievement. They had the wisdom to understand that letters after names were no guarantee for healthy personal wholeness. In their later years we see many men clearing away the clutter of accumulated knowledge and information and returning to essentials.

While these are men whose missionary work brought them on many travels to different peoples and countries, they were also always still rooted in the local place of their early years. The local town and townland; the local GAA club; the local parish. These were men who were entirely devoted to family; their own family and also the Spiritan family. We see this in their lifelong interest in family and local happenings. We see their love for the congregation in their availability to undertake difficult tasks and in their practice of *cor unum*.

Overall, *Irish Spiritans Remembered* leaves the enduring impression of a band of happy and contented men who realised their potential; in the language of the gospel, 'by their fruits you shall know them'. It is my hope that the depictions of *Irish Spiritans Remembered* may provide animation and encouragement to the present generation of Irish Spiritans.

**Brian O'Toole CSSp** 

# Irish Spiritans Remembered Introduction

The Gospel of Luke, his Good News, begins with a litany of the ancestors of Jesus. Looking at the figures whose names are given, we can see the breadth and scope of the genealogy that made Jesus the person he was. Moving from generation to generation, each period with its own dreams and challenges, its hopes and disappointments transmitted something of the human spirit to the divine Spirit of Jesus.

In putting together this second volume of *Irish Spiritans Remembered,* which covers the years from June 1998 to June 2018 the Spiritan Mission Resource and Heritage Centre is continuing its work of mapping the genealogy of the Irish Province by honouring the members of the Spiritan Family who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.

The few lines given to each Spiritan in this volume can only offer a glimpse of the rich diversity of each person's life. But reading between the lines, we hear a story of mission and faith, of people who, living by the Spirit of Jesus, were attentive to the signs of their times. A story of young churches growing throughout the world where the Word of God was proclaimed and the service of the poor was fostered. A story of Spiritans

remaining close to their people in times of war, famine and adversity.

In the lives of each person remembered in this book we also see seeds sown for the present and the future. We are grateful to God for these lives given to Spiritan Mission. We are



grateful to the families of each of these Spiritans for their sons and brothers.

Our thanks go to the editorial team who researched these biographies and who, from the letters and holdings in the archives, bring life to the stories held therein.

In particular we remember with gratitude the life and work of Seán Farragher who was the instigator of this monumental work and whose life was dedicated to preserving and transmitting our rich Spiritan heritage.

Marc Whelan CSSp Provincial

### We Remember Them

Merciful Father, our Creator and Redeemer, as you knit each of us together at the beginning of our life, so you also draw us together as members of the Holy Spirit Congregation. Grant us humility and gratitude as we remember those Spiritans who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.

Grant us courage and grace to follow their path of faith and devotion.

And above all, stir up our faith that we may know that our Lord Jesus Christ has conquered death and has given eternal life to all who believe.

We make out prayer through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

# Irish Spiritans Remembered Foreward

his volume covers the period from 1998 to 2018. The compilation of these 311 portraits has been a team work of three years duration. It has been a work that engaged many different hands coming together.

Primary sources which we used were the confrère's individual personnel file and personal archival boxes. Also used were the obituary notices as written by Brian O'Toole CSSp (2000-06); Eddie O'Farrell CSSp (2006-12) and Peter O'Mahony (2012-18). These were used in conjunction with the funeral homilies recorded in the *Irish Provincial Newsletter* and where available in its original format.

The four main secondary sources consulted were: Fr Henry Koran's books on Spiritans who served on

overseas missions in Nigeria, West & East Africa and Brazil. The Missionary Annals (Outlook) from 1919 to 2010. Go Teach All Nations - A History of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, The Necrology of the Irish Province and the Generalate.

In these 311 portraits we try to present a description of the life of each person; they include the basic facts like education, mission work, relationships and death. We refrained from including anecdotes and tales as we tried to describe without any judgement, reproach or compliment.

We offer a sincere thanks to all the confrères who shared their memories of the deceased with us. This sharing helped us to gain a fuller insight into the person in question. We are indebted to the staff at the Provincial Secretariat for their help and assistance as we are to Mark Daniel of CRM Design & Print. Thanks must also be made to Dolorés Stewart who made the photos for this volume possible and to our custodian of 'grammar and punctuation' Séamus Maguire.

A very special thanks to Margaret Bluett who led the team in the production of this volume. It is Margaret's untiring commitment that has brought this volume to such a fine conclusion.

To all who are featured in these pages we wish *Ar dheis Dé go raibh said go léir.* 

**Brian O'Toole CSSp** 

### We Remember Them

At the rising of the sun and at its going down.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
At the beginning of the year and when it ends.

As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a part of us as we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength
When we are lost and sick at heart
When we have joy we crave to share
When we have decisions that are difficult to make
When we have achievements that are based on theirs.

As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a part of us as we remember them.

By Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer, from Gates of Prayer, published by Central Conference of American Rabbis.

# The Irish Spiritan Bishops in the Gambia 1863-2018

#### **Brian O'Toole**



### **Population:**

1,924,158 (2017)

## **Life expectancy:** 59

#### **Religions:**

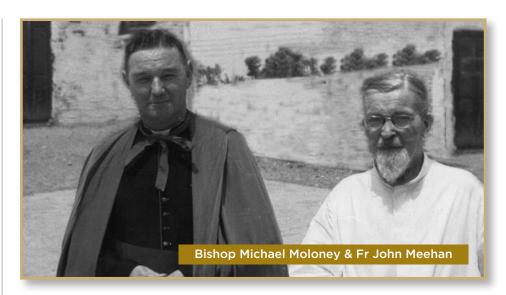
Islam 92% Christian 6% Indigenous 2%

#### Independence:

18 February 1965 (From Britain)

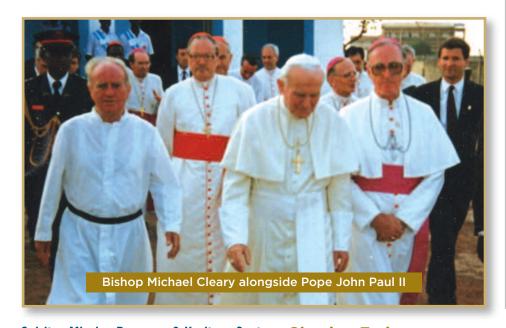
he roll call of Irish
Spiritans working in the
Gambia between 1863 and
2018 lists the names of sixtytwo priests, sixteen brothers
and fourteen students.
Fourteen Irish Spiritans are
buried in the Holy Ghost plot in
the cemetery in Banjul; seven
priests, six brothers and one
scholastic.

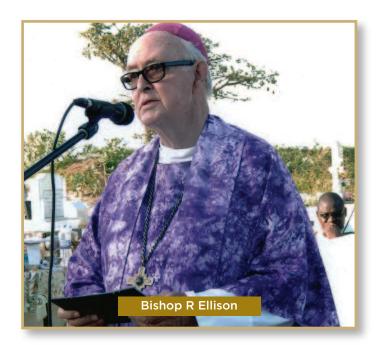
Fr John Meehan CSSp, who hailed from Donegal, arrived in the Gambia in 1905. After his arrival Fr Meehan set about rebuilding the Church of the Assumption in Hagan Street. In the 1920s Fr Meehan opened mission stations at Basse at the head of the river 260 miles up country. Missions were also

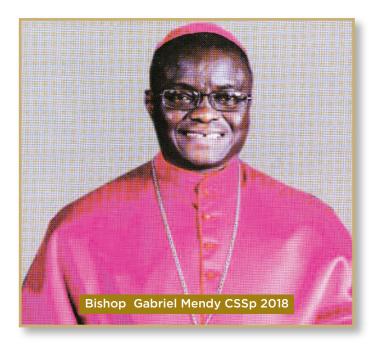


opened closer to Bathurst in Bakau, Jeswang and Sabaji. Fr Meehan died at the Bathurst Mission on 15 September 1954 at the age of eighty-three. Shortly after his death it was stated in *The Mission Journal* that: 'We may be sure that he looks kindly and prayerfully on us where ever he is gone and continues, perhaps even better now, to help his mission and his people to the destiny God has in store'.

Spiritan Michael Moloney was Bishop of Gambia for twenty three years. He was fluent in the Fula language and translated the Catechism and New Testament into Fula. Among his many achievements were the churches and missions established at Campama, Karifing, Brikama, Lamin, Farafenni, Fulabantang, Kavr, Kuntaur, Kartang, Kunkujang, Mensanjang and Tangon.







Besides the many primary and catechetical schools, the most notable secondary schools that he built were St Augustine's and St Joseph's Banjul, St Peter's Lamin, St George's Basse, St Edward's Bwiam and St Therese's Kanifing.

He also established the Lamin Vocational Centre. One of his proudest achievements was the setting up of St Michael's Junior Seminary at Fajora. The formation of the first five local priests represented a vindication of Bishop Maloney's endeavours.

He established the Gambian Pastoral Institute for the formation and education of lay leaders. He also established Catholic Relief Services and Caritas Gambia. Bishop Moloney attended the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965.

As a sign of their deep appreciation of his work, the people of Basse, where Bishop Moloney ministered for thirteen years named a street in his honour. The street is now known as Bishop Moloney Avenue. The British Colonial Government also conferred on him the decoration of CBE, Commander of the British Empire in 1959.

Fr Michael Cleary CSSp arrived in the Gambia in 1953. He taught at St Augustine's High School and became principal in 1960. He became vicar-general in 1975 and diocesan education secretary in 1978. He was consecrated bishop of the Gambia in 1981.

**During Bishop Michael Cleary's** tenure of twenty-five years (1981-2006) he presided over a steadily growing flock and furthered considerably the role of the laity in parish activities, particularly fostering the work of catechists. His priority was the promotion of respect and co-operation between Christians and Muslims. He often spoke of the 'lasting values of peace and justice, of unity and love, of co-operation and friendship'. Under his leadership the first pastoral assembly for the clergy and religious took place in 1986. Bishop Cleary hosted Pope John Paul II in The Gambia in 1992.

Fr Robert Ellison CSSp studied theology, law and the history of Islam in Rome in 1973. He became administrator of the cathedral and vicar-general in 1981. He also took charge of the junior seminary in Lamin. In 1985 he became district

superior of the Spiritans. In 1992 he took over as director of the Gambia Pastoral Institute.

In his address on the occasion of his episcopal ordination on 14 May 2006 **Bishop Robert Ellison** made known to the public the motto he had chosen: NaSa Ngur Dika, Adveniat Regnum Tuum, Your Kingdom Come.

His message ended with a statement that humbly and clearly specified what his own role would be. 'I see the chief task of any bishop...to identify, co-ordinate and encourage these gifts and talents that the Spirit has bestowed on our local Church. Ndanka, ndanka, japa gole – Lord Jesus, may your kingdom come among us'.

In 2006 Bishop Ellison hosted the meeting of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa attended by 120 delegates. In 2008 a full diocesan assembly was held under his leadership. In 2014 he presided at the solemn blessing of the diocesan building, Centenary House.

The episcopal consecration of **Bishop Gabriel Mendy CSSp** took place in Banjul on 3 February 2018.

Bishop's Kouse Villa Pasumple Owers, Blaf

# **Fiftieth Anniversary** of Concern Worldwide

Séamus Maguire



Left to Right: Katherine Loughlin-Kennedy, Fr Raymond Kennedy CSSp, & John O'Loughlin-Kennedy Founders of Concern

The most touching of all sights is the starving children, watch them would bring toars from the hordest heart. They have by the thousand. I sometimes think of the slaughter of the Irn this war is a holocaust of a hundred thousand little ones. It is a sast population gap and many of those who survive will be fully normal.

As the war goes on our territory shrinks, the number of refu food flown in by Caritas, the Council of Churches, the Hed Cross, have helped the nation to survive. Air freight can only supply a one real hope, as I have been saying since June, and that is an ev to the war. Unfortunately peace is not yet in sight.

On behalf of our suffering people I say thanks to the Irish N You have been wonderfully generous in helping your spiritual child in Biafra. The Columcille will remain a symbol of your practical in Biafra what is impossible to men, is possible with God. S ask you to continue your fervent prayers, that the Good Lord, throthe intercession of Our Blessed Mother, may give us the gift of pe

Asking God's blessing on all our contributors and assuring one of our heartful thanks,

+ Joseph B. Whelan

Bishop Joseph Whelan thanks the Irish people

his year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of Concern Worldwide. It was formed during the Nigerian / Biafran War, 1967-70. On the 12 December 1967 a press conference was organised in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin by John O'Loughlin Kennedy in response to the message from the bishops of Biafra seeking food and medical supplies. This had been, conveyed to him by his brother Fr Raymond Kennedy, who had only just returned from that country the previous day. This initial appeal was met with a positive response, which culminated in a Christmas mercy flight being dispatched from Ireland with the requested provisions. However the following year the crisis had deepened with the establishment of hundreds of refugee camps and feeding stations to cater for the victims of the famine caused by the war. On the



Relief supplies being loaded onto a Concern ship



The first ship bought by Concern 'The Columcille'

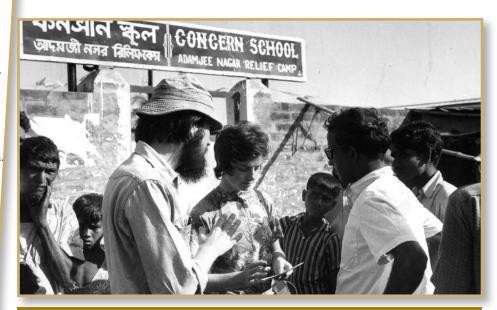
19 March 1968 John and Kay O'Loughlin Kennedy decided to make another attempt at setting up an appeal fund and called a meeting at their apartment on Northumberland Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin. Over forty people attended this meeting including the wives of those who had worked in Biafra, representatives of the Holy Ghost,



RTE Radharc Team interview **Bishop Whelan** 

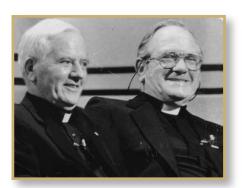
Kiltegan and Vincentian orders, members of Viatores Christi, the Overseas Students Relief Fund Committee and the Knights of St Columbanus. Chief Jerune Udoji and Chief Robert Olisa addressed the meeting giving eyewitness accounts of conditions in the refugee camps.





A Concern School in Bangladesh

Following the meeting John and Kay decided to form an organisation dedicated to raising funds to assist the cause of peace and development, hence 'Africa Concern' was born. It subsequently, organised publicity and fund raising campaigns in order to purchase, transport and distribute food and medicine by sea and air to both sides during the conflict. Following the conclusion of the war the organisation consolidated and expanded its operations to face new and emerging natural and man-made disasters around the world. It subsequently changed its name to Concern (Worldwide) and made the transition from being an organisation which had at first merely reacted to events as they unfolded into one which anticipated and remedied human



The Dohney Brothers, Kevin and Mike

disasters before they became fully manifest. It took a studied and scientific approach to the problems faced by the developing world and recruited and deployed trained personnel such as engineers, technicians, teachers and medical professionals to areas where they



Fr Ray Kennedy training Concern Volunteers in 1974



Fr Michael Doheny & Fr Aengus Finucane

were most needed. Key members of the Spiritan Community who shared in the work of Concern since its inception were Frs Jack and Aengus Finucane Fr Raymond Kennedy became Concern's field director in Bangladesh in 1972 and subsequently executive director of its Dublin HQ in 1973. He was responsible for their entry into Yemen and Ethiopia and established new offices in Britain and the U.S. as Concern Universal and Concern U.S. In Ethiopia Fr Kevin Doheny achieved a significant ecumenical breakthrough by mobilising all twenty churches to help famine victims and in the process met Mother Theresa who became an inspiration. His older brother Fr Michael Doheny, a founding member of Concern, had already developed a close relationship with her in his capacity as the director Concern in Calcutta. Both brothers were celebrated on the T.V show This is Your Life in 1984 which resulted in massive publicity for the work of Concern. Today Concern Worldwide works in approximately twenty four countries around the globe catering for the medical, nutritional, educational and other requirements of those most in need.



Concern training war victims in Bamgladesh

# Spiritan students' youth work in Keogh Square, Inchicore



**Gerry Jeffers - Kimmage Connection** 

n 2017 Gerry Jeffers of

authored: CLEAR VISION:

Clear, Social Justice Champion,

The Life and Legacy of Noel

1937-2003 (Veritas). Noel is

and dispossessed. He was

national president of the

from 1996 until 2002.

described as an indefatigable

champion of the marginalised

Society of St Vincent de Paul

Throughout the pages of the

Kimmage students who were

book we meet a number of

volunteer youth leaders in

Inchicore working under the

Brian Power and Noel Clear.

What follows are all direct

quotes with page numbers:

One of Noel's first cousins,

Kelly CSSp was ordained a

priest in Kimmage Manor

direction of Fr Peter Lemass. Fr

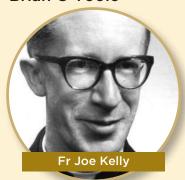
Joe Kelly.... entered the Spiritan

(Holy Ghost Fathers) novitiate

in Kilshane. Six years later Joe

Kimmage Connection

**Brian O'Toole** 



The first [boy's club] holiday, in 1961, was to Clonakilty, Jerry O'Sullivan's home town... Father **Joseph Sheehan** CSSp, a recently ordained missionary about to travel to Nigeria, acted as chaplain to the group (p.53)

In 1967, **Tom [Gilmore]**, became an active member of the conference and a voluntary youth leader. Following Tom's initiative, numerous other Spiritan seminarians became involved...they saw engagement with the young people of Keogh Square [as being] closely related to the Spiritan mission to 'the poor and most abandoned' (p. 83)

John O'Flaherty, one of the Kimmage students who volunteered in the club recalls how, having departed the seminary but still attending university, he required accommodation...They [Noel and others] organised digs for me out beyond Inchicore. I was very grateful. You never forget



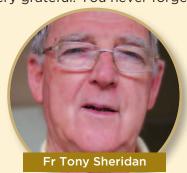
friends like that, he adds (p.97)

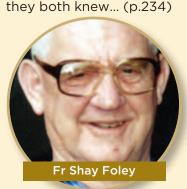
Fr Tony Sheridan, a Spiritan missionary working in Brazil since the 1970s... Seeing Noel in action. I learned that you didn't have to do anything, just be yourself and be present. When that penny dropped, I felt at ease in the Keogh Square life. I am forever grateful for those lessons in how to care (p.103)

The long-term solidarity of Irish

priests, nuns, brothers and lay people with poor and oppressed people is a strong tradition. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the parish priest in the Ndirande township in Malawi's capital Blantyre was Fr Seamus Foley, from Ballinakill Co Laois... As a young Spiritan priest Fr Seamus had been chaplain to the Legion of Mary branch in Inchicore when Noel was a member. They quickly bridged the forty-year gap, swapping stories about SVP, Inchicore and Spiritans







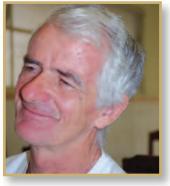
# **Years of Blessing 1981-1996**

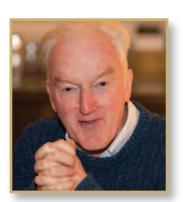
#### **Brian O'Toole**

"

In 2018 the parish of Our Lady of Fatima in Rialto, Dublin celebrates its golden jubilee and for fifteen of those years (1981-96) the Spiritans were a special part of its story







Fr Niall Colgan

Fr Paddy Cully

"

n 2018 the parish of Our Lady of Fatima in Rialto, Dublin celebrates its golden jubilee and for fifteen of those years (1981-96) the Spiritans were a special part of its story

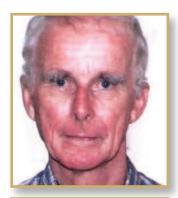
Kimmage Manor had a long association with the parish as fourth year theologians were assigned to it for Sunday ministry. In the register of priests in the parish we find Fr Florrie Lynch CSSp (1970-71) and Fr Frank Leahy CSSp (1971-72).

The Spiritans went to live in Fatima Mansions in October 1981. The Fatima Mansions complex was comprised of fifteen blocks of four storey flats and had become synonymous with poor maintenance, poverty and neglect. Responding to a situation of social breakdown the Spiritan group formed a close relationship with the people and learned to see the social reality of their situation, and thus became more aware of the institutional injustices which were prevalent in Irish society.

Spiritans who served in Fatima Mansions were: Bro Liam Sheridan, Frs: Ray Maher, Brian Murtagh, Michael Murray, John O'Brien and Pete Suttle. Fr Brian Murtagh was the parish chaplain.

Flat 24G was a religious community and also served as a sort of alternative seminary. Members of the Spiritan Community who resided in flat 24G and who were ordained in the parish included: Paddy Cully who was ordained as a deacon in December 1983; Niall Colgan who was ordained a priest on 16 June 1985 and Dave Donnellan who was also ordained as a deacon on 10 December 1988.

Spiritans who formed part of the community in those years subsequently worked in Brazil, Gambia, Pakistan, Rostock and Kenya. In this way the people of Fatima Mansions were linked with the missionary work of the church and the work for justice in many parts of the world.



Fr Peter Suttle



Fr John O'Brien



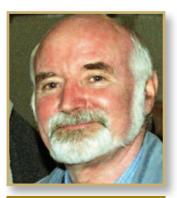
Fr Ray Maher



Br Liam Sheridan



Dave Donnellan



Fr Brian Murtagh

# The use of the Archives for schools: teachers and pupils

### Séamus Maguire

#### The contents of the archives:

- Personnel records and histories of Irish Spiritans members
- Some records of Spiritan schools (but we need much more)
- Records of missionary history
- Records of other organisations that they became associated with
- A large body of personal and business correspondence
- Accounts history of the order
- Books, theses, periodicals
- Memoirs, memorabilia and personal effects of Spiritan members
- Newspaper clippings of associated events etc
- A large stock of photographs, slides and some films



Blackrock College



Holy Family Community School



Rockwell College



St. Michael's College



St. Mary's College



Templeogue College

# But what does all this tell us?

It tells us the story of the Irish branch of the Spiritan order, their historic role and purpose:

- In education
- In evangelisation

This led to the establishment of missions, schools and churches at home and abroad. But it also led to practical material assistance been given to people in need and the establishment of NGOs.



# How Schools etc can use the archives as a resource:

The story of the Irish province of the Spiritans which our archives contain can be used by students and schools for educational and human interest projects.

#### Projects such as:

- How fund raising drives were coordinated nationally in response to specific international crises by raising awareness through media campaigns etc.
- **2.** The day to day work and life in a refugee camp.
- **3.** The airlift of food aid into Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War.
- **4.** How Spiritan mission overseas and in Ireland are connected in the response to the 'migrant crisis' today.



H&A Staff visit the Marian Shrine 'Quenn of Peace' in Ballinalacan, Ballinakill, Co Laois. This shrine was erected to the memory of Fr Mike Doheny and Fr Kevin Doheny. The Mass of dedication on 1st July 2001 was celebrated by Frs Michael Reynolds, John Browne, Alo Dempsey and Jack Fallon.



### Tanzania Banner History clarification.

The impression was given that Kilema and Kibosho are one and the same place. They are in fact over 30 miles apart.

Kilema was the cathedral for the vicariate of Kilimanjaro and later for Moshi diocese until 1967.

It was replaced by the Moshi cathedral in Moshi town. The Moshi cathedral was built by Bishop Joseph Kilasara CSSp.
The architect and engineer was Bro Bernhard Bauer, CSSp.



Stewardship includes all aspects of the Province's heritage.

Special attention will be given to libraries, archives and our spiritual patrimony.

Irish Chapter 2012, No. 52