

## Our Mission in the time of COVID-19

7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Greetings.

Since my last update to our broad network, we have seen more great expressions of Mission. The outlook in Kimmage Manor is also lot more positive than previous weeks, where a number of Spiritan men have recovered. This is a good news story and a true testament to the resilience and the dedication of support staff.

Each day I marvel at the wonderful work of our Schools, how they have adapted during this crisis and stayed true in our ethos. I previously expressed my admiration for how our Schools were conducting classes through online platforms, but now they have taken it beyond the classroom and into the community. Ronan Barry from the Spiritan Education Trust (SET) very kindly collated some of the great work that the Schools are engaging in at present

We have compiled a snapshot of how Schools are supporting those in need and having an impact in the battle against COVID-19. Each school is doing so much more than we can share, and I ask that you read more on their websites and social media channels. Some highlights we have included below:

- Irish rugby captain, **Jonathan Sexton** shares his experiences with St. Mary's College staff and students
- Mr. Oliver Doolan, Chaplain in St. Michael's College, shares a wonderful tribute to **Fr. Séamus Galvin C.S.Sp**
- Blackrock College students raise an **impressive €17,000** for Blackrock Hospice
- Templeogue College students **win a Green Flag** for their *Litter and Waste* program
- Rockwell College lead the way locally with the **donation of PPE** to South Tipperary Hospital

Efforts and stories like these resonate deeply and give us great hope for the future. Thank you all.

Sincerely,



Fr. Martin Kelly C.S.Sp.  
Provincial

## *Our Schools' response...*

All school communities within the Spiritan network have been involved with an innovative and pioneering educational and pastoral outreach to students, families and the wider school community since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place.



The focus of this outreach from our school community has been educational and holistic. The contributions I have witnessed from the schools focused on community building within the school and outside it. Much of the mainstream media coverage has focused on the delivery of education to students. However, Spiritan schools' contribution will continue to be the delivery of a wider and holistic curriculum.

When we come out of this crisis or find a new routine, the commitment of Boards of Management, Senior Management teams and teachers should be celebrated and recognised. Currently they may not be considered 'front-line workers', but they are playing in the same orchestra. This type of commitment from the school community goes to the heart of understanding Spiritan Education. Claude Poullart des Places' first educational community was rooted in prayer, high standards of education and social outreach. It seems today that Spiritan schools in Ireland are striving to follow this example. The following pages are messages from the schools in activities they are engaging in.

Ronan Barry (SET)



St. Michael's  
College



Templeogue  
College



Blackrock  
College



Rockwell  
College



St. Mary's  
College

# PERSEVERANCE IN ADVERSITY

## St. Michael's College

### Community Building

#### ***Mile a Day for Month of May***

This challenge is encouraging students to get out and get active during the COVID-19 pandemic. All students are challenged to either walk or run a mile every day for the month of May within the government guidelines. Students will complete a form at the end of each day including photos of themselves out running which can then be loaded to the school website to bring everyone together as part the St. Michael's community.



### Charity in the Community

#### ***St. Michael's College Blue Run 2020***

Previously we have held a 5km run on Sandymount beach for our school community to take part in (About 600 people take part made up of students, staff, parents/family, past pupils), so with the lockdown in place we held a virtual event on Monday May 4<sup>th</sup>, where we asked members of our community to go and run 5km. So far, we raised over **€8,000** for the Irish Cancer Society, who missed out on hosting their annual Daffodil Day in late March due to COVID-19. An amazing achievement!!

We encouraged participants to take a picture of themselves and upload it for our site to create a slideshow of members of our community uniting in a school event. (Click [here](#) to view)

We are going to send out a message from the school as well as a t-shirt to all participants to reward them for participating and there is this [link](#) to give donations by all participants in order to raise money.

## ***Remembering Fr Séamus Galvin C.S.Sp...***

**Fr. Séamus Galvin C.S.Sp (93)** – Father Séamus died on Thursday 9th April 2020. Originally from Co. Clare, Father Séamus spent 3 years in Trinidad while studying for the priesthood.

After ordination, he served in Ireland, primarily in education and was particularly closely associated with the development of St. Michael's College. He spent two decades as National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS).



Mr. Oliver Doolan, Chaplain in St. Michael's College, made this wonderful tribute to Father Séamus, which you can watch by clicking [here](#).

# PERSEVERANCE IN ADVERSITY

## Templeogue College

### Community outreach and School

We were delighted to be awarded with our Green Flag Green flag for this week. We are proud of the hard work of our Green Schools Committee. Some of the highlights of the work done can be found [here](#). First Year students continue to care for the environment around them by litter picking in their local area as they didn't get to take part in the National Spring Clean like they hoped to. The 2km radius around school has never looked cleaner!



### PPE initiative

We were really pleased to be able to donate 45,000 gloves along with all of the goggles from our Science department to the local Garda Stations and St. James's hospital as part of our response to the COVID-19 crisis.

## Blackrock College

### Charity and Community Initiative

On Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, thirteen students from transition year in Blackrock College ran a relay marathon in aid of Blackrock Hospice and Good Grub. They raised an unbelievable €16,000! Each boy ran around 3.3 km while obeying COVID-19 lockdown rules and staying inside a 2km radius of their homes. Blackrock Hospice provides palliative care to those who are terminally ill and 'Good Grub' provides fruit and vegetables for families of DEIS school students in Dublin. More information can be found [here](#).



### Pastoral Initiative

We have engaged in some ethos initiatives for our current and past students, current and past parents, grandparents, entire College Staff across all departments and our Spiritan Community: Having regular Pastoral and Staff Meetings with our staff and students have allowed us to "Be There".

Frequent contact with our students to deliver classes with class contact, prayers and reflections, through the College website, Moodle, Twitter, Microsoft Teams and LinkedIn with tens of thousands of interactions. Parents have also engaged with this programme.

Each member of the Pastoral Team was invited to submit messages, graphics, links and videos of hope, faith and inspiration, prayer and song all of which have been on the theme of hope, faith, togetherness and shared on College website and social media.

# PERSEVERANCE IN ADVERSITY

## Rockwell College

### **PPE initiative**

A member of the Science faculty, whose wife is a nurse at South Tipperary General Hospital, arranged for the donation of goggles from the Science labs to the hospital. This was followed by contact with Thurles secondary schools who also donated goggles and other PPE Equipment. The Rockwell College nursing staff later donated PPE equipment that had been purchased for the Residence to a local GP service that supports our boarders and one staff member is actively involved in a community group making facemasks.



## St Mary's College

### **Past Pupil Support**

As a morale boost, Irish rugby captain, and Spiritan past pupil Jonathan Sexton gave a talk to a school assembly of 430 students each sitting in front of a computer in their own homes, everyone able to hear and see him and ask questions. He told the boys that Leinster are advising their players to get up early, go out for exercise within the 2 kilometre limit, follow a routine, and make a point of arranging meetings with others online so that they do not become socially isolated.



He spoke of his own initial fears during the lockdown that he might not play again for Ireland, and how he had overcome those fears by focusing on what he could do - becoming fitter and giving his body time to recover from the collisions of match rugby. He also shared some tough love that his coach gave to him, that if you are still healthy, or if you are not working as a front line medic, or if you have not lost loved ones, then you shouldn't complain.

### **Weekly Eucharistic gatherings**

A different type of virtual gathering together takes place every Sunday at 11.00 am. Dick Olin C.S.Sp, alone in the College Chapel, celebrates the Eucharist, and others can join from home through their computer via this [link](#). Unlike the Mass on TV, we can see and hear one another, and interact together. There is a sense of participation as the Scripture Readings and the Prayers of Intercession are read by students, past pupils and family members from their own homes, and participants can likewise join in the prayers. While being unable to come together in Communion in the Chapel is a real loss, there has been a grace and serenity to these Sunday services, as shared online.