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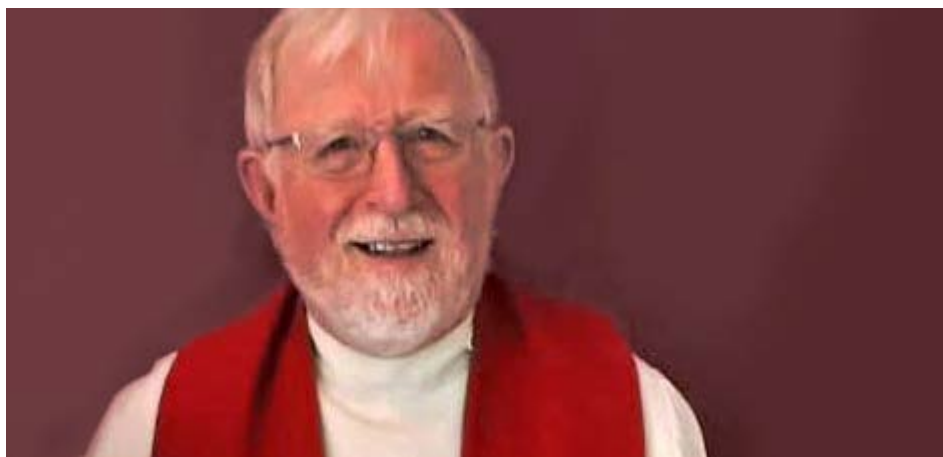
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WELCOME

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this first issue of our new newsletter. In its pages we hope you will find many interesting stories about Spiritan works, both here in Ireland and overseas.

Since 1859, Irish Spiritans have been engaged in missionary work in over 50 countries, and although times have changed, the Spiritan purpose of 'walking with the poor' remains alive.

Our bi-annual newsletter will help bring some of this work to life for you in words and pictures. We hope that you will enjoy it!

Fr. Martin Kelly, CSSp, Provincial

OVERSEAS NEWS



TAIWAN

On the early morning of March 21, 2008, the devastating news came through that the small local church, in the Aborigine mountain community of Dagan, built in the local Aborigine style, had been gutted in a fire. Dagan is situated about 20 kms from my own base in the town of Dong Shi, Central Taiwan.



That morning I went to visit the local community and they were all in a state of shock and disbelief — they stood silently in a trance-like state looking at the charred remains of their church. The atmosphere was heavy with sadness and a sense of despair which mingled with the still smoldering smoke and smells of the fire.

It appears that an electrical fault was the cause of the fire but thank God that it was very early in the morning, and no one was hurt.



As we stood there, looking around in dismay, one of the Catholics suggested we pray. Together we sang songs and prayed in solidarity and community — sharing our sadness and shock. The prayer was cathartic and transforming. Hope was born and this small community of Christians resolved to rebuild the church. Death gives way to new life of resurrection.

The local Bishop has pledged that the Diocese, even though struggling themselves, will donate half the money needed to rebuild the church. We have set ourselves a target of one year to raise the remaining €200,000.

The local Christians are determined to see their church is rebuilt. With God, all things are possible and with the power of prayer and love I believe that one year on, the ground-breaking ceremony for the building of a new church will materialise. We live in hope.

Fr Seán O'Leary, CSSp, Taiwan

OVERSEAS NEWS



SOUTH SUDAN

The Spiritans began operating in South Sudan in 2012. At present, there is a group of four confrères from around the world: Fr. Boniface Isenge and Fr. Sospeter Kiarie from Kenya, Fr. Nolasco Mushi from Tanzania, and Fr John Skinnader from Ireland. The Group manages projects such as agriculture, education, emergency relief, water and sanitation as well as the pastoral programmes of their Christian communities.

At present, Fr John Skinnader, CSSp, originally from Co. Monaghan, is engaged in a number of empowering and life-giving projects in the Diocese of Rumbek where the Group operates. One such project is the creation of a series of gardens in what are very arid and difficult conditions. Women work at clearing the fields so that they can create vegetable gardens to both feed the community and generate income.

The Group has also built a new primary school at the cost of €400,000 in Holy Cross Parish, an isolated out-station of Rumbek where there was only a 'hedge-school' until now. Fr John is also currently involved with a new church project in his community, food distribution to vulnerable people, in addition to adding a new maternity wing at the Leprosy Clinic.





SPIRASI (SPIRITAN ASYLUM SERVICES INITIATIVE) IS THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN IRELAND.

Established by the Irish Province of The Spiritans in 1999, the rehabilitative services offered by Spirasi are unique in Ireland and take a multidisciplinary and holistic approach, offering medical, therapeutic, psychosocial, befriending, training and educational supports. The particular services offered by Spirasi are as follows:

- > A multidisciplinary Initial Assessment (IA) for survivors of torture to review their medical, therapeutic and psychosocial support needs, and to determine how Spirasi and other agencies can provide ongoing support in relation to these needs
- > Psychosocial officers offer ongoing supports to clients during their time with Spirasi
Therapeutic interventions are provided for survivors of torture which include individual, group and family therapies;
- > Medical Legal Reports (MLRs) are produced for the International Protection process;
- > Spirasi also provides English language classes for survivors of torture and their families which complement the rehabilitative work;
- > The Spirasi Befriending Programme is a service offering one-to-one companionship by trained volunteer befrienders to Spirasi service users. The aim of the service is to reduce isolation and loneliness and to provide support with integration in Irish society.

Spirasi's office is located at 213 North Circular Road, Dublin 7, and most of the clinical services are based there. It also has therapeutic hubs in Galway, Limerick and Cork.

Outreach psychosocial services are provided on a weekly basis in Baleskin, the main Reception Centre for the Irish State. Similar services are provided on a weekly basis in Mosney, the largest Accommodation Centre for asylum seekers in the State.

For further information visit <https://spirasi.ie/>



SYNODAL PATHWAY (BASED ON AN ARTICLE IN INTERCOM, JUNE 2022)

In 2020 the Irish Bishops announced the National Synod. In spite of being interrupted by Covid-19, the process is well underway and there have been many meetings and discussions so far.

As is often the way, terminology can be a challenge for many of us. So the first thing to do is explain the word 'synodality'. 'Synod' comes from the Greek for 'together on the way'. In this context then, Synodality is about 'journeying together' in order to discern and discover 'What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time, and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?' This is about a spiritual practice and not just a debate about how the Church is organised.

The National Synodal Pathway is intended to facilitate a wide-ranging process of reflection and discernment in which people can bring their concerns and their fears about the very real challenges facing the Irish Church at present, but also share their hopes and what is precious to them about their faith.

It is envisaged that this work will take five years in total. A Steering Committee has been appointed to lead the

first two years of consultation and discernment. This phase is intended to be a period of prayer, listening and discernment. A period of reflection will follow during which the findings will be amalgamated before the final submission is sent to the Vatican.

The second three-year phase will be the time of planning and preparation – for putting in place whatever structures may be needed to take this forward, to support people to engage and to connect people in prayer.

This content is adapted from an interview with Dr Nicola Brady, Chair of the Steering Committee of the Irish Synodal Pathway, which featured in the June 2022 issue of Intercom. To read the full interview please visit <https://www.intercommagazine.ie/synodal-pathway-long-term-transformation-an-interview-with-dr-nicola-brady/> Also visit synod.ie to stay informed about the process.



SPIRITAN MISSION IRELAND (SMI)

The Spiritan Mission Ireland Office was established in 2017 with the key aim of advancing, facilitating co-ordinating and resourcing all who are actively engaged in the Spiritan Mission in Ireland. In the context of today's Irish Church and the movement towards Synodality this means promoting an openness to new forms of participation, ministries and belonging.

Since the start of 2022 SMI has embarked on planning for a number of significant projects including:

- Collaboration between the Spiritan Education Trust (SET) and the Parishes in the appointment of a chaplain/youth minister to work between schools and parishes in Kimmage and Greenhills;
- In collaboration with the Catholic Bishop's conference SMI has offered a residential course in An Tobar (the Spiritan Retreat Centre in Ardbraccan, Co. Meath) for overseas pastoral ministry workers aimed at helping their inculturation into Irish Church and society;
- SMI has organised the six-week Mission Impossible course in Kimmage aimed at helping lay people prepare for participation in the church of tomorrow. In collaboration with the Archdiocese of Dublin the course runs every Wednesday evening for six weeks. Over sixty people have registered for the course. Given the level of interest, it is hoped that further such courses will run in due course;
- In keeping with its collaborative approach, and in conjunction with Spirasi (see pg 4), SMI is currently exploring a motor mechanic apprenticeship scheme for disadvantaged young people.

MISSION APPEALS 2022

Mission Appeals is a very important aspect of Spiritan work. While it has been on hold since March 2020 due to Covid-related restrictions, this year we are able to return to this work of sharing our missions story, and are visiting the Diocese of Killaloe, and Area 1 of the Diocese of Down and Connor.

From Brazil to Vietnam, Ethiopia to South Africa, Spiritan men walk with the poor and marginalised, and work with communities on issues as basic as clean water and sanitation, access to sustainable food supplies and education.

Supported by our Promotions Office in Kimmage Manor, a team of confrères who have spent many years overseas with the poor and marginalised do the appeals.

For further information, please contact the Promotions Office at 01 406 3090 or email info@holyghostmissions.ie.



THE DOHENY BROTHERS

The story of the Doheny brothers, Fr Michael C.S.Sp. (1915-1992) and Fr Kevin C.S.Sp. (1925-2000) is one of mission and devotion to the interests of the most vulnerable and least privileged around the globe. This tale had its genesis in the Biafran War of 1967-70 which resulted in their transformation from missionaries to international aid workers. It was the catalyst for Fr Michael's involvement in (Africa) Concern which was set up to provide food and medical aid to the Biafrans. Michael subsequently joined with Caritas in India in response to the refugee crisis of 1971-72 caused by the Bangladeshi War of Independence where he experienced 'a rediscovery and a renewal of his vocation as a minister and apostle of the Lord'.

Meanwhile Kevin was appointed to Ethiopia where he established C.R.D.A. (Christian Relief and Development Association) to co-ordinate development efforts there. He also represented the Cheshire Foundation promoting the interests of the disabled worldwide. In 1979 Fr Kevin moved to Zambia to serve as the Refugee Officer of the German NGO Misereor. In 1980 Michael became the Public Relations Officer for Concern in the Thai border areas receiving Kampuchean refugees. The following year he joined the Concern team dealing with the effects of famine in Uganda.

To fund these endeavours both men did a lot of promotional work in the UK, America and Europe in close collaboration with other NGOs. Michael also established Firoda Films to showcase the work of Concern and the work of the Overseas Disabled Association (ODA) activities of his brother Kevin who had by the early 1980s set up the O.D.A. (Overseas Disabled Association). While they had their health their varied and active lives as priests truly proved that 'a missionary's life is not his own as he has to share it with others'.