



January - February 2015

THE HARP

Bulletin of the Divine Word Missionaries, Irish-British Province



Challenges for People of Faith Today - What can we do?

In recent months, I have been struck by the phenomenon of people showing support for people who are being persecuted by adopting slogans such as “I too am a Nazarene” with the Christians of Syria or “Je suis Charlie” with the people of Paris. And now there are those Coptics of Egypt killed in Libya! How effective, and long lasting are these manifestations likely to be? I think that it is important for us people living in Freedom, to evaluate where we stand and how we might react in these modern, and frightening evolving situations. (Editor)

I recently had a report from our confrere **Dominic Emmanuel**, in which he speaks of his attempts to address such persecutions in his life and ministry as an SVD priest in India.



“The week before and after Christmas was taken up with my interviews on different channels debating on the rights of the minorities, vis-à-vis the clamour of the right wing Hindu fundamentalists. It was not easy to fight with the representatives of the government in power.

On 24th December, we had a meeting with our **Prime Minister, Mr Modi**. Though I was one of the 10 members of the delegation, led by the Archbishop of Delhi, to wish him ‘Merry Christmas’, there were also other

people in the hall where he met us. Totally unexpectedly, as the PM entered the room, he walked straight to me, without acknowledging anyone else in the room, shook hands with me, hugged me, and then, turning towards the rest of the people in the room he said, “we used to debate on TV channels in the past”. When I asked him whether he still remembered that, he turned around and said, “How can I forget it?”. During the ongoing conversation, pointing towards me, he once again mentioned, “Those days we used to fight with each other...”.

Though he referred to our meetings which took place more than 14 years ago, he has evidently been watching me in recent TV debates where I have attacked the current government and himself (also in my writings) on not coming forward to make a statement against the strident right wing Hindu politicians who claim that the Indian nation is a Hindu nation and that all Muslims and Christians, who were once upon a time Hindus, should now return to the fold of Hinduism.

That’s the current fight. Having learnt from the Master to speak truth to power. By His grace, I believe, I have so far not minced my words nor been distracted by the PM coming directly over to me. True I am noticed and certainly noted by him (the government), for speaking up.

I will rely on the prayers of the readers of the HARP and others to continue carrying out this responsibility. Though I am no longer the official spokesperson of the Delhi Archdiocese, the TV channels still call me and I don’t shy away.”

My thanks and best wishes to Fr Dominic as he continues to exercise his charism. Can we do anything? Editor.



**Hail, Glorious Saint Patrick, dear Saint of our Isle,
Look down in your love**

**Bless our Land and our People,
Bless and watch over all who bear your great name!**

**Bless all missionaries and their friends who, like you, went out in the name
of the Lord to carry the Good News to others. Amen.**

PROVINCIAL NEWS

Let us give thanks for the Jubilarians of 2015.

Brian Gilmore	9 January	50 Ordination	England
John Ryan	14th June	40 Ordination	Papua New Guinea
Eamon Donnelly	8th September	50 Vows	United States
Garreth Roche	8th September	50 Vows	Papua New Guinea
George Agger	8th September	50 Vows	Montserrat, W. I.
Jeremiah Lanigan	8th September	50 Vows	Donamon
Tony Coote	8th September	50 Vows	Donamon
Vincent Twomey	8th September	50 Vows	Maynooth
Gaspar Habara	8th September	25 Vows	Kildare town parish
Paul StJohn	13th September	40 Vows	Dublin Archdiocese
Brendan Kelleher	14th September	40 Ordination	Japan
Chas Guthrie	20th September	40 Ordination	Donamon
Finbarr Tracey	20th September	40 Ordination	Maynooth
Patrick Claffey	20th September	40 Ordination	Dublin
Patrick Dillon	20th September	40 Ordination	Brazil
Liam Dunne	20th September	40 Ordination	Dublin
Dolorina, SSps	2nd July	70 Vows	Farnham, England.

In addition to the above, we remember **Tom Morrison** RIP (buried in Brazil) and **Renata Sistemich** SSps (buried in Steyl) who would have celebrated their 40th anniversary of ordination and 50th anniversary of Vows respectively, this year.

Cyril Ming Ma SVD will be ordained to the priesthood on Wednesday April 15th in Donamon Castle at 11am. The ordaining prelate will be Bishop Kevin Doran, the new Bishop of Elphin. Cyril has been appointed to Ghana, West Africa. After his ordination he will continue in the IBP until August of 2015.

Larry Finnegan SVD is currently in hospital and is being treated for various ailments including spots on some internal organs. Our prayers and thoughts are with him.

Timothy Lehane SVD has been appointed to the Maynooth community where he is in charge of our Formation program.

John McAteer SVD will return from his visit to Brazil

at the beginning of March.

Plans are going ahead for the **Roscommon Consensus** meeting in Donamon in September.

Mission awareness has begun in the **Elphin Diocese**. Consider yourself invited to give a hand.

The **Apostolic Workers** are beginning to enquire if missionaries need anything for their missions at this time. If so, please let me know.

Misean Cara recently carried out a visitation into one of our projects, a **Farm School**, in Oriental Mindoro, Philipines. It seems that they were pleased with what they saw there.



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REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Patrick Ruane SVD, Brazil, ill
Larry Finnegan SVD, Donamon, ill.
Mrs Rose Lee, Edenderry, ill.
Srs Joan & Dolorina, SSps, ill.
The Lanigan sisters in Drombane, ill.
Marian Lanigan RIP
Desmond Buckle, Belfast, RIP
Eamon Carroll, Dublin, RIP
All who ask for our prayers & our benefactors

An interview with the SVD European Zonal Coordinator Fr Peter Dusicka SVD

Liam Dunne SVD Editor.

Ed. Welcome to Ireland.

Peter: Thanks, Liam, nice to see you again. I must say that I am happy to be here since this is my first visit ever to Ireland.

Ed. Can you tell me something about yourself?

Peter: I come from Slovakia, where I was born and raised. My dream was to become a diocesan priest. Yet, the Lord had something more for me. I got to know SVDs clandestinely in 1988 since during the time of Communism in former Czechoslovakia all male religious congregations were banned. I was ordained a priest in 1990 in Nitra, Slovakia. Then I worked 4 years in various parishes, followed by my ministry in various levels of formation and administration in the Slovak SVD province.

I also studied Spirituality in Krakow, Poland (1993-95), and religious formation in Chicago (1999-2000). For three years I was also a member of the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Centre team in Steyl, Netherlands. In October 2013 I was appointed the Zonal coordinator of the European zone of the SVD. This is the structure within our Society that coordinates and animates the missionary work on the European continent. Currently we are working in 24 European countries, the latest one being Albania.

Ed. What brings you to Ireland?

Peter: The purpose of my visit is to attend a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Zonal Assembly that will take place in September 2015 in Roscommon. One part of the agenda of the Assembly will be dealing with the commemoration of so called Roscommon consensus. Together with Fr. Patrick Byrne, the IBP provincial and Fr. Martin Üffing, the head for the Roscommon board, we are going to prepare the agenda for this commemoration. Besides, I am looking forward to meeting some of the confreres here whom I have come to know in the past.

Ed. Can you tell us something about the Roscommon Consensus?

Peter: At the Zonal Assembly of the provincials of the European SVD Provinces, held from the 21st - 28th October, 1990, in Donamon Castle, the following statement was made: "We agree that Europe be considered an area of our work in the same sense as other areas in the world are." This meant that, for us, Europe could be understood as a missionary territory, eligible to receive missionaries from abroad. Thus, our young confreres, who were preparing for their final vows and writing their three choices for their future missionary work, could also put down European provinces as countries for their missionary work.

Ed. Tell us something about the how the consensus has worked out in reality in Europe

Peter: We can note the effects of the RC on three levels: a) our understanding of mission; b) our community life and c) the living out of our missionary

charism in the local context. It was a big and positive step in our missionary self-awareness, a step towards a deeper understanding of doing mission. The European provinces were no longer seen only as "sending" provinces, they became also "receiving" provinces. In some ways, missionary work could now be understood as a "two way process" or a dynamic process of "giving and receiving", "proclaiming and listening", "challenging and respecting".

Regarding the community life, the issues of lived internationality and multiculturalism came forth. With the Roscommon Consensus we

were challenged to implement the process mentioned above in our context: to open ourselves and to welcome confreres from abroad and listen to what they have to offer. Confreres from other countries, cultures, and nationalities were and are bringing along their cultures, traditions, their way of doing things as part of their identity. We are challenged to find ways of living together and being enriched by one another. In this way our religious communities could become signs of hope and even models for the world around us which was itself becoming

(continue on page 6.)



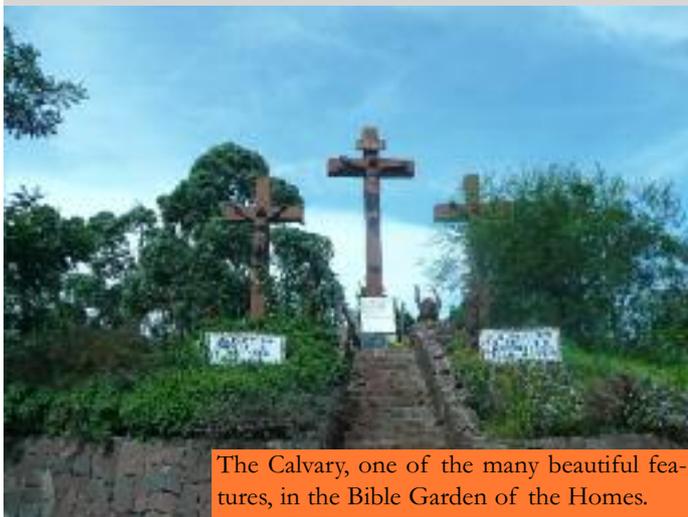
A Visit to South America

Liam Dunne SVD

ARGENTINA

When I heard that our confrere, **Liam Hayes**, was gravely ill towards the end of 2014, I, as mission secretary of the Province, decided to visit him. Alas, before I could get there he died. It was December 7th. Despite his untimely death, I still found it useful to go and visit his three beautiful homes for the poor in Obera, Misiones, Argentina. Having procured some funding for his Homes from **Misean Cara - Irish Aid** over the years, I considered it important to go there and to ascertain how the institution would continue to function without Fr Liam at its helm.

To the great joy of everybody concerned - in Ireland, the UK, Argentina and elsewhere, the local Province of the Society of the Divine Word decided to take it under its wings. They deserve a special word of thanks for doing so. And so with the future of the Homes assured, the beautiful work of caring for the abandoned and unwanted poor people, begun by Fr Liam and carried out with the assistance of his many friends in Ireland, the U.K. and elsewhere, will be able to continue well into the future.



Some of those being cared for in the Homes, at mass, with Bro. Hugo SVD.



The SVD team who are looking after the Homes of Fr Liam Hayes in Obera now are, at left, Argentinian, **Bro Hugo Castro**, Vice-Provincial and formerly of Angola, and at right, Indian Fr **Biju Karimpuzhithazhe**. Here they are chatting with the bishop of Obera, **Mgr. Damien S. Bitar** who is a good friend of the Homes. On the eve of the feast of **St Arnold Janssen** he published a very nice article in **Fides** in which he spoke warmly of the presence of SVDs in his diocese.



A moment of prayer at Liam's grave in the Bible garden.

It was humbling and yet inspiring to see how the staff, Argentinian, Irish, Swiss, Filipino and German get involved and care so well for the patients who are either visually impaired, crippled or handicapped. During my visit, I was happy to see experts coming in to see how they could contribute to the wellbeing of the patients with physiotherapy. The calibre of the Board also impressed me by their dedication. And of course, the smiles and the appreciation of the patients makes it all worthwhile.

BRAZIL

My main reason for visiting Brazil was to greet 87 year old **Paddy Ruane** SVD from Kiltymagh, Co Mayo and to convey to him the greetings of his home Province. Paddy now resides at the SVD central house, along the banks of the Tapajos, in Santarem. He is being lovingly cared for by the community and especially by his dedicated care staff. I was pleased to see a major job of renovation under way in the house along with the installation of a lift. These will make life more convenient for those who are elderly or confined to a wheelchair, as Paddy is. Among those caring for Paddy, is **Rex Simangi** SVD, from Wewak, Papua New Guinea. He helps me to keep in touch with Paddy, which I appreciate.

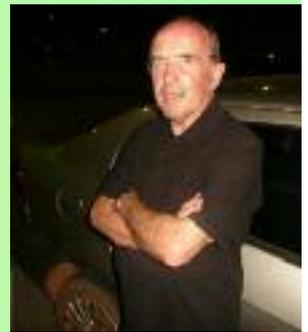


It was wonderful to visit too the parish of Alenquer, two hours by boat up the river, a place to which I had often written over the years. I was warmly welcomed there by **Manuel Rodriguez** SVD, from Portugal, who did most of his studies in Ireland. Great was my surprise when he informed me that I was in the parish where **Paddy Ruane**, **Frank Kom** and **Kevin Keenan** had all served. While there, I visited the local community radio studio with Manuel and was interviewed by him. He then closed down the radio for the night with "Prayer at Bedtime" for his listeners.

I also had the pleasure of visiting **Joe Dillon** and many of his "Flower Remedies" friends in their clinics. These alternative health therapies were assisted by **Misean Cara** when they began. The clinics and the treatments seem to be making good progress in



Santarem, Sao Paulo and elsewhere. Visiting the parish of **Pat Dillon**, who is about 135 kms out of Sao Paulo, was like visiting paradise since his place is situated amidst mango, orange, sugar-cane and guava plantations! I discovered that the SVD are loved there. **Pat Smyth** continues his urban ministries in Sao Paulo. It was interesting for me to see that all of our men are now accompanied by confreres from Indonesia, Poland, India or elsewhere. Rarely are they alone!



Mexico

I proposed Mexico as my first choice of mission to my superiors back in 1974 but they appointed me to Wewak in Papua New Guinea. Now, for the purpose of visiting 83 year old **John Ledwidge**, **Paul Merne**, **Eddie Elliott** and **Javier Lino** I took the opportunity to visit it. It was a great visit. It was good to meet them and others and to see something of their work and environment there. I was also delighted to visit the great Basilica of Guadalupe and to remember in prayer all our missionaries, families and collaborators before the image of Our Lady. Over the years I



Frs. **John Ledwidge**, **Paul Merne** and **Eddie Elliott** at the Sacred Heart parish, in Coyoacan district, Mexico city.

I have had much to do with our men in Mexico and so it was good to visit them.

My profound thanks to everybody who welcomed me.

Confreres in the Sacred Heart parish house, front, Parish priest, Marek Skowronski, from Poland; John, from Dublin; back: Fabianus, from Indonesia; Kingsley from Ghana; Liam: Eddie from Dublin and Javier Lino, ex-Angola now Mexico.



increasingly international and multicultural. In the context of the local church and of our missionary charism, missionaries from abroad are visible signs of what the “catholicity” of the Church means. There are no “national” churches; there is only one, “catholic – universal” church to which we belong. This is an impetus to strengthen the sense of solidarity among all believers. They form an integrated part of all our ministries and apostolates, therefore we can find them present in all ministries that form part of our charisma: Formation, Education, Bible, Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation issues, migrants and so on.

Ed: What are the plans of the SVD in Rome for this development now?

Peter: The General Administration of our Society sees this development positively and encourages further discussion and deliberations about this project. Everybody – also missionaries from abroad – should be involved in the process of drawing up a future direction for our missionary presence in Europe. It should also be done in collaboration with the local church since we are at its service.

Ed: What effect is it having on Europe now and in other countries.

Peter: I would summarize the effects of this development in three key words: lived internationality and multiculturalism, hope and life. Our provinces became internationalized and “younger” due to the Roscommon Consensus. For instance in the German Province, almost all confreres under 40 are of non

European origin. The arrival of the young missionaries in Holland is a great sign of hope that this province – and the mission in Holland – has a future. Their different cultural perspectives is in some way “re-awakening” us to different values and to making our life more dynamic.

Ed: How many members of the Society have taken up the opportunities made available through the Roscommon Consensus?

Peter: For the time being there are around 260 SVD confreres from abroad assigned to our European provinces/Region and in August 2014, there were exactly 50 of them working in various offices and leadership positions (provincial council, rectors, formators, coordinators, treasurers). This number is quite high

and they are already shaping the future face of the SVD in Europe.

Ed: What are your hopes and expectations now?

Peter: “His life is our life, his mission is our mission” we read in the Prologue to our Constitutions. My hope is that we will grow in our commitment and dedication to the Lord, who called us and entrusted us with his mission. At the same time we will remain open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who is guiding and strengthening us in our missionary endeavours. Even though it seems that the post-modern society does not need God, the Gospel or missionaries, I am convinced that the words of Jesus are more true than ever before: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few”. Thanks be to God for every “worker”, every missionary who commits himself to bringing the Good News to all.

Ed: Thank you.



New Schools for Maynooth

It was reported recently that two new secondary schools and a shared Sports Facility are to be built in Maynooth on the **Moyglare Road**. These will be a Community College and the replacement school for Maynooth Post Primary school. They will each cater for 1,000 students. Work will commence this year and they will be operational in 2017. (source: **Labour News**, Maynooth.)

75 years in Ghana

The SVDs just celebrated 75 years in Ghana. To mark the event, they decided to build a half-way house for the marginalised in society, street children, prostitutes and down and outs. The work of getting this project up and running has been left to **Andy Campbell** SVD who appeared on four TV stations recently soliciting for a house or a plot of land. He knows that God is on his side and will move someone to respond!

SSpS

Sr Renata Sistemich SSpS. R.I.P.

SVDs and SSpS of Ireland and Britain were saddened at the death of Sr Renata. During the past year she had several brain haemorrhages. As a result of these, she was taken to Steyl, where she could be looked after. It was another attack there which claimed her life. She came from Northern Germany. She came to Ireland in 1988 and worked in Formation and then as a counsellor in the Raheny area. May God reward her.

Sr. Miriam Altenhofen SSpS is carrying out a visitation of the SSpS Region during the months of February and March. She will visit each of their five communities and get to know the situation and ministries of each. Her visit will conclude with an assembly in Birmingham.

Pray for **Sr. Joan Quirke SSpS (Fairview)** who will undergo cancer therapy. We pray for a rapid healing and a return to good health for her. **Sr Dolorina SSpS**, Farnham, also underwent treatment for cancer recently. She is 93 years old!

Congratulations to **Sr Mary Hudson SSpS** on her 75th birthday.

Sisters have recently come from Slovakia and Indonesia to learn English in the Region.

Mrs Rose Lee, the mother of **Sr Carmen**, moved into a nursing home near Edenderry recently. We wish her peace and tranquillity as she begins this new stage in her life.

INTERESTING!

Mr Michel Houellebecq (France) said the wider theme of his book, *Submission*, is the return of religion to the centre of human existence, and the demise of the Enlightenment ideas that have prevailed since the 18th Century. "The return of religion is a worldwide movement, a tidal wave... Atheism is too sad... I think right now we are living through the end of a historic movement which began centuries ago, at the end of the Middle Ages," he told Le Figaro.

In the end Mr Houellebecq implies in his interviews that the return of religion is a good thing - he says he himself is no longer atheist - and that even Islam is better than the existential emptiness of Enlightenment Man.

LETTERS

Thanks very much for sending us Advent greetings and Christmas edition of The HARP. We would once again like to express our appreciation to you and your team for your never-ending contribution to our ministry at **Vivat International**.

Thank you for **Tony O'Riordan's** piece about **Pat Coleman** in the November-December issue of The Harp. Good that you published it. Pat deserved it for his lifelong love of and service to the SVD. His name as an SVD Brother was **Bro. Finbarr**, which **Tom O'Connell** with his clever talent for coining names, changed to Bro. Furchtbar (German for terrible or awful) because of Finbarr's delight in making practical jokes. When we opened the SVD house in London way back in 1975, Pat was one of the very first visitors. He had heard about the new house and wanted to know how he could help us. This Christmas I will remember Pat in a special way, recalling how he and **Isabel** invited the small SVD community for Christmas dinner with the patients living in the hostel which they were running. I sometimes joined him when he went to bring hot food and drink to the homeless in London, nicknamed Cardboard City because of how they used cardboard boxes to cover themselves at night. Yes, basing Pat's funeral homily on Mt 25:31-40 was indeed very fitting.

Peter McHugh svd, Rome.

It is a small world. You might be interested to know that **Brian Lawless's** sister (me) was part of the design team working on the restoration of the **Longford Cathedral**. I work with Carrig Conservation and put together the historical research and the conservation strategy for the repair and restoration of the stone and plasterwork. I was delighted to meet the emeritus bishop, **Colm O'Reilly**, last Saturday morning especially as he was the driving force behind the restoration. Best wishes

Cora Lawless (Coleman)

I was away for 9 days visiting Indian villages and isolated agricultural communities recently. Just arrived back to go directly to the Diocesan Assembly. About 700 people took part. About **25 Indians** took part also. We also had the ordination of two SVD priests in February, one of whom, **Antonio**, will be going to **Zimbabwe**. It was a great joy for our **Amazon Region**. Our confrere, **Bro Karl**, from Germany, has recently been transferred from the University of Belem to Santarem, where he is continuing to teach History and to give courses.

Pat Brennan SVD, Amazon in Brazil



Joseph Yang SVD, back left, was one of those called to continue on to the diaconate in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, recently.



Rex Simangi SVD, all the way from Wewak, PNG, to the Amazon Region. Here he is, just returned from a bush trip, by boat, up the Amazon, in the dining room of the SVD house in Santarem, where Paddy Ruane SVD is living. In fact, Paddy's door is the one you can see at the left in the picture.



Joe Dillon SVD with some of the ladies trained in herbal medicine preparations.



Attending the 10th birthday of Miseen Cara were from left: Mr Matt Moran, out-going Chairman of Miseen Cara, Maeve Bracken, (Tullamore) vice – president of Viatores Christi; Claire O'Neill, (Trocaire) & Paula Slattery, former Ambassador to Argentina, President of Viatores Christi.



Sr Mariana SSpS Buenos Aires, formerly of the Maynooth community, playing the guitar accompanied by Sr Gloria SSpS from Indonesia, in Buenos Aires.



Conferees in the Provincial House in Mexico city for lunch. The Provincial, Fr John Benas SVD, is at right. Fr Guilherme Andrino SVD, from Brazil, at left, is a missionary in the States but is currently polishing up his Spanish in Mexico.