

Platea or chronicles of St. Paul's Retreat Mount Argus, 1868-1872 part two. Father Norbert.

The Feast of St. Paul. Since his beatification the festival was kept on 16<sup>th</sup> of November as *sedes propria*, but after the canonisation the Holy Father, Pius IX, fixed the 28<sup>th</sup> of April which should be the feast day in perpetuum. The same Pontiff issued a decree authorising the first feast to be kept with a solemn triduum but without fixing a day, leaving that to the Father General to arrange as he thought most convenient. The Father General in turn left the arrangements outside Italy to the respective provincials and in this Province it was fixed for the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April. In Mount Argus as in the other Retreats of the province, the preparations were on the grandest scale possible, but if we might form a comparison of the different houses from the somewhat scanty notes which have come down to us, we might safely conclude that Dublin led the way. Everything available and appropriate was pressed into the service of the occasion. The church itself was cleaned and renovated and additional decorations to those which it reserved on the occasion of the reopening a short time before were added, especially in the sanctuary. Flowers and plants of the choicest description procurable, occupied every nook and corner, giving warmth and brilliancy to the general effect, and lending an air of richness to the whole picture. Then in the musical and in the oratorical world, the selections were equally happy. Preachers were secured for each of the three days, and preachers whose claim to fame as pulpit orators did not rest on mere hearsay, but who had long before acquired a reputation which was known and recognised far beyond metropolitan circles.

The solemn services began on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> with solemn high mass, which commenced at twelve o'clock. The day was particularly fine, and seemed as if St. Paul of the Cross, who, during a long lifetime had carefully avoided every honour and dignity, now controlled the very elements so that his children and clients might with greater facility honour their common Father in Heaven, who had so enriched and rewarded his faithful servant. From an early hour in the forenoon the approaches leading to the retreat were crowded with those who in answer to the various announcements, came to take part in the celebrations. The fashionable of fashionable Dublin were there; the wealth and talent of Dublin were there, and what was perhaps more pleasing to the good St. Paul, the poor were there. Side by side with the professional celebrity or the successful business man worshipped the poor man or the poor woman, their social inequality forgotten for the moment by reason of the common bond of faith and fatherland. And this is saying a great deal of Dublin – of Dublin, where, perhaps more than in any other city in the world, the lines distinguishing class from class are more tightly drawn. It should be added however that this is never done to the exclusion of charity. The pride which favours and encourages social ostracism and forbids association ceases to exist in the presence of hardship or destitution. We take from the "Weekly Freeman" a summary of the triduum celebrations, which, as reported by an eye witness, may be regarded as correct and reliable.

*The Catholic Church in Ireland.*

*Church of St. Paul of the Cross, Mount Argus.*

*It is often our pleasing office to give accounts of the various festive celebrations which bring the character of the church's ceremonial before her faithful children; but it has seldom fallen to our lot to record a festival such as that which took place a few days ago in the church of the Passionists at Mount Argus. The festival was instituted by a special Papal ordinance, to celebrate the canonisation of the founder of those good*

religious to whose labours and spirit few Irishmen are strangers, the Fathers of the Passion. It commenced with a Triduum on Sunday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, and culminated on the Feast itself, Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup>. During that period sermons were preached morning and evening, and numbers of the faithful availed themselves of the spiritual blessings with which the functions had been enriched by the Father of the faithful, in approaching the Sacraments. On the first day the Very Rev. Father Bridgett CSSR preached, and the theme of his sermon was the life of our Lord as exemplified in S. Paul of the Cross, in its triple aspect of hidden, apostolic and suffering. The thorough knowledge which the Very Rev. Father had of the Saints life and of his very words enabled him to draw out the picture with those tints and colourings which only an accomplished orator can successfully distribute. In the evening of the first day a gifted son of St. Francis (whose life very much resembled that of S. Paul ) the Very F. O'Reilly, C.S.F.C. brought the life of the Saint before the congregation under a new light.

On the second day the Very Rev. Canon Power, President of Clonliffe College (afterwards Bishop of St. John's, Newfoundland) displayed the ascetic features of the saint's character. He comprised his discourse within the striking evangelical paradox that, dying to himself, he lives to God and his neighbour. The grace and eloquence of the sacred orator's manner stole the conclusion of his discourse into the hearts of his audience. In the evening of the same day a distinguished son of St. Paul of the Cross, Very Rev. Alphonsus O'Neill, Rector of Mount Argus, whose eloquence is always the loadstone to a numerous auditory, spoke on the mission of St. Paul to sinners in carrying out the work of redemption. He avoided with great taste those points in the saints character which might be supposed to reflect too much honour on his children, only alluding to the prolific nature of the tree he planted in the church, and the necessity of the seed thereof dying in order that its branches might the more widely extend. On each occasion the church was crowded with worshipers anxious to avail themselves of the special graces to be obtained by fulfilling the conditions of the indulgences granted by his Holiness.

On Tuesday, the day of the Feast, the religious festivals culminated and reached the highest point of devotional fervour, when it became known that the most Eminent the Cardinal Archbishop would preside, and that the panegyric of St. Paul of the Cross would be preached by the eminent divine and most distinguished pulpit orator, the Lord Bishop of Kerry. In preparation for the festival the church was decorated in a most effective manner, and a throne, surmounted with a canopy of crimson cloth, decorated with rich gold lace, erected for His Eminence, the Cardinal. It stood on the gospel side of the altar, and harmonised with the general aspect of the building. The altar was beautifully decorated, and in every respect, save extent, the church presented an aspect well calculated to elevate the thoughts of those present by the suggestion which it conveyed of the highest graces of art, betokening, at a distance, the glories of heaven. A large and fashionable congregation was assembled, but it was not confined exclusively to the members of the higher ranks, as it contained as well the humbler members of the community, who have derived so many blessings from the ministrations of the sons of St. Paul of the Cross. Immediately after his Eminence had been conducted to the throne by the attendant priests – Fathers Alphonsus, Joseph and Jerome – high Mass commenced, the Rev. Father Ignatius being celebrant priest, Fr. Dominic, deacon, Fr. Pancras, subdeacon, and Fr. Pius, master of the ceremonies. After the first Gospel the Most Rev. Dr. Moriarty, Lord Bishop of Kerry, ascended the altar, and preached the panegyric. (Sermon given in extenso later on.)

*His Lordship's sermon occupied more than an hour in delivery. Throughout the attention of all was sustained to its acutest point by the thrilling eloquence and masterly oratory of the illustrious preacher.*

*After the High Mass the good Fathers had the students class hall (decorated by Mr. Byrne with picturesque draperies suited to the festive occasion) laid out for an excellent dejeuner. The following were some of the guests: His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop, the Lord Bishop of Kerry, the Lord Bishop of Kilmacduagh, Dr. Fallon, the Lord Mayor, Mgr. Meagher, Mgr. Moran, Canon Brock, Canon Pope, Revs. M. Collier, PP., J. Bentley, F. Russell, and several others.*

*At seven o'clock in the evening Vespers were sung, and the Rev. Dr. Conroy preached. The Rev. gentleman dwelt specially upon the mission of St. Paul of the Cross to his age. Philosophy, history, an acute perception of the leading traits of saintly excellence, and a hearty devotion to his theme, combined to render the sermon a masterpiece of Christian eloquence, and a crown to all the splendid discourses pronounced in the saint's honour during the three days. The functions of the day, which will not soon be forgotten, and which were seldom equalled, were concluded by a "Te Deum" and Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. Weekly Freeman's Journal.*

The sermon of his lordship of Kerry was afterwards published in pamphlet form, and as it was considered the best contribution to the oratory of the occasion, we give it here in full, both because of its excellence as a panegyric, and with a view to its preservation. It was with some difficulty that a copy could be got even now, and probably years after this the difficulty would become an impossibility.

*"We preach Christ crucified" 1 Cor. 1. 23.*

*In these few and plain words St. Paul sets before us the plan and purpose of the preaching of the Apostles. They had been commanded by the Saviour to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. How did they understand, and how did they execute the Great Commission? What was the good news they announced to the world? In what form did they present the new religion by which mankind was to be saved? They preached Christ crucified.*

*The wisdom of the pagan would have been seeking happiness in the gratification of man's natural inclinations, either in intellectual or sensual pleasure; and hence, in reply to the preaching of salvation through the crucified, the learned of Athens and the voluptuaries of Corinth cried out folly! The revelations made to the Jewish people taught them to expect a heaven-sent deliverer; but they supposed that his coming would be in might and majesty, that he would raise high the sceptre of Israel among the nations, and that thus the promises made to Abraham should be fulfilled. Hence in answer to the same announcement of salvation through the crucified, they cried out scandal! But all those who by the gratuitous mercy of God were called from out the Jews and the Gentiles, and who, in obedience to this call, yielded themselves captive to the faith, recognised in this contradiction to the vain thoughts and the blind passions of men, the wisdom of God, and, in the choice of what was weak and poor and lowly and suffering for the accomplishment of the mightiest purpose, they recognised the power of God. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a scandal, and unto the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*

*The Apostle gives us further to understand that the whole substance of the doctrine he preached was summed up in the mystery of a crucified God. 'For I judged not myself', he adds, 'to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' The incarnate God is the centre of all being. The Word was the divine archetype of all things that were made, and when the word became flesh all that creation that went*

*forth from God was in him united to the Creator. 'For in Him', writes the Apostle, 'were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, and by him all things consist'! Now, the passion and death of that incarnate God is the continuing mystery to which all the other mysteries of his life are referred. From the crucified all graces flow. The sacraments and the sacrifice, the imparted knowledge and the awakened love, every outpouring of the Spirit, all have their source and spring in the bleeding heart of Jesus. This is the fountain of the redemption. 'Because in him it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things to himself, making peace through the blood of the cross.' Coloss. 1.20. The whole Gospel is contained in the mystery of Jesus crucified.*

*This mystery was not only the sum of his doctrine, it was in the mouth of the apostle the motive power by which he moved the world. He did not use the artifices of eloquence or of argument. "I came not", he says, "in loftiness of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of Christ. I judged myself to know nothing but him crucified! And this mystery was manifested not alone in the apostle's preaching; it was shown forth in his person, in his manner, in his conduct. "I was with you in a weakness and in fear and in much trembling." And again, "in labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." and yet, O how wonderful are the ways of God! It is in the folly and the scandal of this doctrine, in the absence of every human help, of every natural advantage, in the simplicity of his utterance, in the poverty and the weakness and the suffering he endures, that the apostle sees the secret spring of that divine power which God has given him, "Gladly therefore", he says, "will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may dwell in me, for which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ. For when I am weak then am I powerful."*

*Such, dear brethren, is the idea of the apostleship given to us by him to whom the great work of converting the pagan world was entrusted. This apostleship must continue to the end of time in the church. We, in whose hands the work is now, are often tempted by many natural reasons to depart from the primitive form and spirit of the great original portrayed for us by St Paul. But God is pleased to raise up men, from time to time, in his church, who preach the gospel as it was preached in the beginning, and in whom God manifests his power as of old. Different lineaments of the Saviour's likeness are salient in the lives of Apostolic men. In St Francis of Assisium we recognise the poverty of Jesus; In St Francis of Sales, his meekness; in St Vincent of Paul, we see his benignity, his compassion for every form of suffering humanity; in St Ignatius the desire to promote God's greater glory; in St Alphonsus Ligouri we have a manifestation of the burning love which gave us the Blessed Sacrament to be our food, and Mary to be our mother, and there was one in later times, whose name was Paul, and his surname was "of the Cross", and he so lived and preached and wrought that in his life and in his preaching and in the works which he did, and in the great work he left after him, we can see and see nothing else, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is of him I wish to speak to you today.*

*The life of this great servant of God could be told in as few words as the history of the three hours' agony on the Cross: for, though it lasted more than 80 years, it was but one long crucifixion.*

*It has pleased divine Providence to call to the work of the apostleship some who, in their early years, had experienced the infirmity of sin, that they might be more humble and fitter to compassionate the sinners weakness - others destined for this Godlike work are preserved in holiness. Such was Paul of the Cross. He was a saint from his infancy. The white robe placed on his head at the baptismal font was never sullied or stained*

*by mortal sin. The salt of wisdom then placed upon his lips never lost its savour. The burning light was never quenched. When closing nearly eighty-two years of life the cry was raised - behold the bridegroom cometh - he held it lighting still, and joyously he went in to the everlasting nuptials. Pious parents watched over his childhood, and he was nursed in a home of which religion, not the fashion of the world, was the rule and order. But over and above parental care and parental example, he was guided and enlightened by the spirit of God, who was preparing his soul from afar for a special embassy to man. And the scourge, with love written on every lash, which was presented to him in a vision, taught him he was to be a victim sacred to the suffering love of Jesus. The innocence of childhood grew into the fervent piety of youth, and then his time was spent in frequent communication with God in prayer, in heroic practice of mortification, and in promoting the neighbour's spiritual good by advice, by example, and through the pious, confraternities to which he was associated. He was yet a young man in the world, but, in the town where he dwelt, he was doing the work of an apostle. You know, brethren, what that means. You have had, and you have yet, in this most favoured city, many amongst the laity whose time, and energies, and abilities, are devoted to the furtherance of God's glory, whom the amusements of youth, or the more absorbing cares of mature age cannot estrange from the delightful labours of charity. You have them in your society of St Vincent de Paul, and in more various associations of charity which cluster here round the heart of Catholic Ireland. Only imagine that devotion exalted to the loftiest height of heroic sanctity and you can form some idea of St Paul of the Cross in the first twenty-five years of his life. We learn to value this kind of life the more when we look to his subsequent career, and consider that this was the discipline by which God chose to prepare him for it.*

*It was in his twenty-fifth year that the designs of Providence upon this vessel of election began to be manifested. He felt at first a strong desire to separate himself from the world, and to lead, alone with God, a life of prayer and penance. Then there came upon him a vehement impulse to rescue souls from perdition; and though these vocations seem to a great degree incompatible, yet their combination is a leading feature in the work of St Paul of the Cross. To live alone with God, and to work for the soul of man, to live in a retreat and to labour in a mission, to be like Jesus praying on the lonely mountain-side and then preaching in the crowded temple or the busy street of Capernaum - this is the life of a Passionist.*

*In a vision he saw the habit which his order now wears, and he was told by the Blessed Virgin to establish a congregation which should wear it as a dress of mourning for the Passion of her Divine Son.*

*He then bade farewell to all that he loved on earth, laying the ground of his claim to that hundredfold reward which is promised to those who leave house, and home, and kindred, for Christ's sake. He received the habit from the hands of his bishop in the city of Alessandria in Piedmont, and then, like Ignatius in Manresa, like Moses on the mountain, like our Divine Lord in the desert, Paul of the Cross, in the solitude of a lonely cell, in the practice of the fiercest austerities, in a profound retreat of forty days, wrote the rules of his future order.*

*After this, Paul, though not yet in holy orders, was commissioned by his bishop to preach and teach, and the work of his mission began thus to unfold itself.*

*By one of those divine predilections for particular places, of which we can no more assign the reason than of God's predilection for particular persons, Paul was moved by secret inspiration to select as his residence a lonely promontory on the shores of the Mediterranean. He first made a fruitless attempt to get the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff for his rules, if we can call that attempt fruitless which gave him a*

*glorious opportunity of practising humility and patience, and taught him how good it is to wait in silence God's own time. Repulsed from the Pope's palace as a suspicious adventurer he went to his appointed solitude in Monte Argentaro. Bare-headed and barefooted, sometimes under the scorching sun, sometimes under the pelting sleet, he walked these long weary journeys, without scrip or staff, depending solely on God's Providence and man's charity.*

*But his rest in solitude was more fearful to flesh and blood than even his painful journeying. With the companionship of one, who was his brother according to nature, and still more according to the spirit, Paul gave full scope to the purpose of his life - to honour the Saviour's Passion by imitating it - so that he could say with the apostle that he endeavoured to complete in his body that work of suffering which Christ left as a legacy to the Church. He slept a few hours on the pavement of the Oratory. At midnight he rose to chaunt the Divine Office, and to make three hours of meditation. His food was a little vegetables or herbs with bread and water. He sometimes wore an iron belt armed with sharp points. In his prayer he sometimes knelt on sharp iron spikes. With a discipline made of blades of steel he used to lash and hack his flesh, and when, in preaching, his words were not sufficient to move sinners to repentance, he had recourse to the same argument of torture, taking the discipline and speaking to them and for them by the voice of his blood. Oh! How truly might he say - we preach Christ crucified.*

*Some years passed on during which with this extraordinary commission, he preached and catechised in different parts of Italy. In his thirty-third year, that was the year 1727, he was ordained priest by the sovereign Pontiff himself, who was then Benedict XIII. It was remarked that the Pope, after he had laid his hands on his head, and bid him receive the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins, exclaimed Deo Gratias - thanks to God. Was it not a prophecy of the many graces God was about to bestow on his church through Paul's ministry? Was it not an anticipation of that Te Deum which, on last St Peter's Day, over the martyr's tomb, our reigning Pontiff intoned, and a hundred thousand voices re-echoed in thanks and praise to God for the glory given on earth and in heaven to that humble priest who lived as if he knew and loved only Jesus crucified.*

*From that time Paul of the Cross went forth to preach, strong in the divine power of the priesthood. He had received a verbal permission from the Pope to gather companions and to live according to the rules he had drawn up, and which had hitherto received only episcopal approval. They were subsequently approved by several Pontiffs, by Benedict XIV, by Clement XIII, and Clement XIV, so that after much deliberation, after many prayers and tears, after many journeys and long waiting, Paul saw his society raised to the rank of a religious order, with all the rights and privileges which the Church grants to those who leave all things to follow Christ, who bind themselves to walk in the paths of his counsels.*

*When Benedict XIV was giving his sanction to the rules, adverting to the fact that the order is founded on that mystery which is the most essential and fundamental in all religion, namely the Passion of Christ, he said, this order is the last come into the world: it should have been the first.*

*These approvals of the sovereign Pontiff were the events of Paul's life. His ordinary work was the same throughout. He founded houses, or, as they are called, retreats of his order wherever he was invited to do so by ecclesiastical authority. He visited year by year these various communities, so as to maintain throughout the spirit of the Cross. In this royal highway which Christ had trod, he taught his children to*

walk. From that path he never swerved to the right or to the left. When the work of visitation was done, mission after mission filled up the year.

You, my dear brethren, and the people of Ireland, generally, have learned in these latter times what means a mission. As the missions in the particular form in which we have them now, began with St Vincent of Paul over 200 years ago, and were then carried on by various congregations, it was so here. The children of St Vincent began the work in recent times amongst us, and now we see priests of divers orders, old and new, the children of Dominic, of Francis, of Ignatius, of Alphonsus, of Paul of the Cross, the congregations of Oblates and of Charity, going from parish to parish, with the message of penance and of peace, inviting all the walk in the broad road of sin to repent and to become reconciled to God.

It was at all times desirable that, besides the ordinary ministry which God has appointed, some extraordinary means should be used to rouse the slothful and to terrify the sinful. In the old law besides the priests and Levites prophets were sent from time to time to the people of Israel and Juda. King Josaphat is praised because he sent Levites and priests through his kingdom, "who taught the people of Juda, having with them the Book of the law, and they went about all the cities of Juda and instructed the people." That was a series of missions. Throughout the whole history of the Christian Church we see spiritual life revived and refreshed by agencies which were superadded to the ordinary means and ways of grace. There is such a downward tendency in man, such a heaviness in the human nature ever gravitating earthwards, that, unless we are helped by frequent and vehement impulses, we cannot keep to the level of a holy life.

In these days of ours, the most prominent agency which the church adopts for this purpose is the mission, which is in reality the adaptation to the people of the divinely inspired exercises of St Ignatius.

The infallible authority of the Church is pledged to the usefulness of this means of grace. (Transcriber's note:- A footnote appears here as follows:- The 65 of the Propositions of the Synod of Pistoia, condemned by Pius VI in the Doctrinal Bull Auctorem Fidei runs thus:- a lengthy Latin quotation follows, which is difficult to read). For the Church is infallible in her approval of religious orders, and she has approved of several whose chief purpose and reason of existence is to give missions to the people.

Missions are sanctioned by the blessed experience of those who as prelates or as priests are charged with the care of souls. Everyone on whom this fearful burden presses with its crushing weight welcomes this help from the strong hand of God, and it is never rejected except by the ignorant, the selfish, or the proud.

You have the missions sanctified by the grateful acclamation of the people wherever this favour is bestowed upon them. But beyond the approval of Pope and Bishop, of priest and people, there is the approval of the spirit of God made manifest to all in the prodigies of grace wrought by this means. Oh! What glorious victories wait upon these God-like legions on their march through the land! The hardest and more stubborn hearts are softened into love. The vilest and filthiest are purified. Hatred and wrong are driven like dispossessed demons from the soul, and Jesus triumphs in the obedience of an adoring people. For the mission is "the voice of the Lord thundering on the waters: it is the voice of the Lord shaking the desert."

But these spiritual blessings are never purchased without sacrifice and suffering. All graces come from the Cross as from their source, and the taste of its bitterness as well as of its sweetness accompanies them. The life of the missionary is a martyrdom. Those long weary hours spent in listening to tales of sin and sorrow - the

*intense application of the mind to the cure of the soul's diseases - the anxiety to do more than the stinted measure of time and strength allows - the exhaustion, and the discomfort, and the hard strain on the best tried patience, are part of the price at which the missionary purchases the sanctification of those to whom he is sent. Those who witness these labours feel compassion and they wonder; but they do not remember that the same toil is repeated month after month, and that in this weary round life is consumed.*

*Many means which a holy ingenuity suggests are used to move souls in these missions. Paul of the Cross relied on one - the Saviour's Passion. He carried it in his heart which was ever full of saintly sorrow and compassion. He carried it in his broken, bleeding, attenuated frame. He manifested the Passion by his abundant tears, by the long agonies of his prayer at the foot of the crucifix or before the Blessed Sacrament, by his burning wounds, by his extreme poverty, and by the tribulations and persecutions and disappointments, which made his whole journey through more than 80 years of life like to last march of the Saviour from Pilate's Hall to Calvary. He could say that he bore the mortification of Jesus in his body, that the life of Jesus might we manifested in his mortal flesh.*

*Brethren, this was the philosophy of his life – Paul the apostle flung from him with contempt the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent. “Howbeit,” he says, “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” This wisdom hidden in mystery and ordained unto glory is the secret and divine power of our Lord’s Passion and death.*

*It was this that filled the soul of our saint with a sense of the infinite perfection and of the supreme right of God. It was in this mysterious abyss of lowliness that he read the loftiness of the majesty of God. It was in this fearful act of reparation, in the exaction of this debt, that he read the rigour of the justice of God. It was there he saw the justice, and the mercy, and the wisdom of God all united in one, and thus was he inflamed with an immense desire to assert the sovereign right of God to the universal homage of mankind.*

*It was in the Passion of our Lord that he strove to fathom the depth of the malice of sin. When he saw it squeeze the blood from the crushed heart of Jesus he was filled with that intense horror which made him pursue sin and seek to extirpate it as the only evil thing on earth.*

*It was in the Passion of our Lord that he learned the value of man’s immortal soul. He saw what a high place that soul must hold amongst the works of God since he came from heaven to save it. What must be the eternity of glory that awaits it in heaven, what must the eternity of pain that awaits it in hell, when it cost the blood of the Man-God to purchase for us the one, to preserve us from the other.*

*He knew that the Passion of Christ was not only the price of the world’s redemption, but that it was the chief instrumental means by which man was to be brought to godliness. Our Divine Lord spoke as man had never spoken. He worked miracles which testified to the present power of the Divinity; but it was not to these he attributed the conversion of the world. It was to his Cross and Passion. “If I be lifted up from the earth”, he said, “I will draw all things to myself. This he said, signifying by what death he should die.” In the order of Divine Providence this was to be the means of healing every wounded soul. As they who looked on the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert were cured of the bite of the fiery serpent, “so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” His passion was to be the argument by which our divine Lord was to draw mankind to his obedience and to his love. The same must be used by those in*



*whom his spirit and power dwell, and they must use it not alone in word, but in the self-denial of their lives; for the rule holds good to this day that the conquests of every apostolic man will be in proportion to his sufferings and his sacrifices. When God said of the first Paul that he was a vessel of election to carry his name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and People of Israel, he gave the reason and showed the way – “for I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” And when he chose in latter times this Paul whom we honour today, Oh! he did show him that if he was to promote God’s glory on earth; if he was to destroy sin; if he was to save souls; if he was to exalt the Son of Man by establishing his reign in the human heart, he should drink to the dregs the chalice of His sorrows; he should bear the bloody scourge, the thorns of mental anguish should pierce his brow, he should often share the opprobrium and the abandonment of Jesus; he should be nailed with Him to the Cross so that he might be able to say with the great apostle, “Christo crucifixus sum cruci”.*

*Though our saint lived as it were on Calvary, yet he had glimpses of Thabor. He loved the glory of his Maker, and he saw fervent souls – valiant soldiers of the cross – grouping round him, enlisting under his standard, wearing his livery, and pledging themselves to carry on his work. He loved the souls of men, and he saw them cleansed and sanctified when he spoke to them of Jesus, or raised his hand to absolve them. God made the very laws of nature yield to his intense desire of soul-saving, for his power and authority and mission were confirmed by stupendous miracles. And he was allowed to see bright visions of the future – his order growing and spreading, and diffusing far and near the good odour of Christ. He longed and prayed unceasingly for the conversion of England, the great stronghold of Protestant heresy, and God granted him the favour of seeing in a vision his children established there, and perhaps he saw much more than we have seen yet. That saintly Father Spencer, whose earnest piety and simple faith so often edified us here, and who moved all Europe to pray for the conversion of England, was one of the spiritual sons of St. Paul of the Cross. And that other, whose presence Ireland enjoyed for too brief a season – the man whose name stands first on the roll of intellect in this century whose conversion has guided so many a wanderer into the fold – the illustrious Newman was received into the church by the first Passionist who came to England. Then visions of a land where all is peace, and of a glory that never wanes or fades came to comfort the aged sufferer. It was time for him to stretch his weary limbs, but he would stretch them only on the Cross. To the last he would suffer with his crucified Saviour. But who can tell what joy the sweetness of Divine love caused in that heart whose every pulse was for Jesus crucified! What assurances of present friendship he received from the Master he so long and so faithfully served, what assurances of a near rest in the fulness of peace, in the vision of God.*

*The Mother who stood at the foot of the cross, and who endured the martyrdom of compassionate love comforted the aged servant who took her place and stood so long in the footprints she left on Calvary. She would tell him how all the gloom and all the sorrow and all the shame and all the agony of the Passion were swallowed up in the glory of the Resurrection, and how from the life-long contemplation of Jesus the man of sorrows he should soon pass to the eternal vision of Jesus risen from the dead.*

*The happy moment came at length. His course was run. When the fathers and brothers of his order kneeling round his bed had recited the prayers for the departing soul, they commenced to read for him from the Gospel the history of the Passion of our Lord. It was the book in which he had read all his life long. The volume was now*

to be closed and the Passion was to be over for him. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, feast of St. Luke, in the year 1775, and in the 82<sup>nd</sup> year of his age, Paul of the Cross went to his eternal rest.

*There is some spiritual instinct which makes known the death of a saint even before it is attested by miracles. Without common counsel, but with a common consent, all are convinced that a saint has passed to glory.*

*I remember, not many years ago, something like it here, when a secret thrill went through the city at the death of one of the fathers of this house who had been little known or scarcely seen in life. When Paul of the Cross breathed his last, the public voice proclaimed him a saint. The Sovereign Pontiff ordered his body to be carefully preserved, knowing well that his mortal remains were sacred relics. Great miracles wrought by his intercession subsequently revealed his heroic sanctity, so that the present Pontiff, Pius IX, amidst the acclamations of the largest assemblage that ever represented the Universal Church, pronounced the decree of his canonization on the last feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and appointed the 28<sup>th</sup> Day of April for his festival.*

*And now, dear brethren, what lesson does this life teach you?*

*The wisdom of this world is to shun the Cross. The world's wise men are they who contrive to escape poverty, and pain and humiliation. The wisdom that is of God consists in taking up the Cross, and bearing it after our divine Lord until we enter into heaven. To common sense and reason this should appear the wiser part; for whether we like it or not we must have the Cross. The experience of all men attests that suffering of some kind follows human nature. It is a law as universal as the law of death. Surely then it is wise to turn to account what cannot be avoided, what must be endured. Moreover, conformity to the will of God requires that we submit to the dispensations of His Providence, that we bear with patience the Cross which he lays upon our shoulders. Again, the discipline of the Christian life implies the carrying of the Cross. One man in order to lead a Christian life must crucify his too great love of riches and honours. All the appetites irascible and concupiscible must be kept within their proper bounds, and this restraint is a cross for human nature.*

*But, my dear brethren, if we would make our eternal election sure, we must not be satisfied with submitting to the cross, we must look for it and love it. Without a likeness to our Divine Lord it is impossible to enter heaven. Where there is no love of the Cross it will not be easy to trace a resemblance to Him. We must be planted in the likeness of his death in order to be like to him in his resurrection.*

*The holy life which the church sets before you to-day is not one that the children of the world are called upon to imitate in the intensity of its suffering love, but it is a living lesson teaching you to bear with patience and with holy joy the cross that is laid upon you, teaching you to subject your souls and your senses to the strict discipline of God's commandments, and of the rules which holy church prescribes; teaching you to value a life of self-denial. The life of S. Paul of the Cross teaches you to seek in the sufferings of our Lord the courage to do this. It teaches you to bathe your heart every day in His Passion that you may be strong in his love. When our saint lay upon his death-bed and looked back upon his long life, did he regret a single pang that he had endured in soul or body? No, he longed to suffer more. I remember the death of a good layman in whom the faith was strong. "I have lived," said he, "a long life. I have enjoyed the amusements of the world, but now I would sooner look back on one quarter of an hour of pain than on all the pleasures that this world ever gave me." Brethren, that moment will come for us all – that moment when man becomes wise at length, that moment when the soul is illumined by the dawning of the*

*light of eternity. I tell you that in that hour you will not regret a single pain of life, and that you will regret many a pleasure.*

*That we may live in the knowledge and love, and die in the embrace of our crucified Lord, is the grace we ask this day through the intercession of St. Paul of the Cross.*

*Sancte Paule a Cruce, ora pro nobis.*

It may be considered perhaps that the above sermon might have been summarized, but, as has been already remarked, I am sure that many years after this it will be read with interest, when probably it would be impossible to get a complete copy elsewhere.

The early autumn of this year witnessed the first display of intellectual activity which the establishment of the College in Mount Argus was intended to awaken – namely, the public examination of all the students in their respective classes. Hitherto this annual event amongst us was a very tame and unpretending exhibition. And necessarily so, as the students were grouped in fives or sixes in different houses in the province. Naturally this distribution of strength afforded little room for emulation, much less that wholesome rivalry which the presence of numbers is calculated to call forth. Though in this respect St. Paul's College differed from other colleges outside – even ecclesiastical establishments – where the students are induced to work and compete for prizes and distinctions, nevertheless it was the object of the President and the whole teaching staff in Mount Argus to establish a system of competitive examinations, which would attain the desired object of intellectual training and its consequent results. Some weeks therefore before the examination, the students were told that both a written and a viva voce examination would be held in all the subjects gone through in class during the past year, and two or three of the students in the classes of Theology and Philosophy were appointed to defend theses in these subjects. The appointment of the students together with the propositions to be defended was made by the different professors, subject to the approval of the President. Besides this the junior students and those of the seniors not engaged in preparing for the theses, were given two subjects – one sacred, the other secular – on which an essay of at least a certain number of pages should be written, and which was to be read in public. In addition to all this, and perhaps for the first time in the history of the Congregation, a certain number of the more advanced were to take part in a play, which this year was selected from the “Merchant of Venice”. Of course it was not to be played in character, with dresses etc peculiar to the stage proper, but the duty of reciting the different parts entrusted to the various actors was expected and insisted upon. The President's object in this was to secure an ease and an elegance of delivery when in after life they would have to take part in apostolic missions. In the large class room, which was also the students' recreation, and to-day known as “Saint John of Gods” a platform was erected, from which the candidates for histrionic honours delivered their several orations. It may be said here that the play was not a decided success, except to give the audience an opportunity of laughing most heartily and perhaps sarcastically. Most of the parts were recited with accuracy and correctness, which showed both industry and retentive memories, but a nervous awkwardness gave a strained and artificial cast to nearly all of them. But these very defects showed the necessity of such training. It was a first attempt however, and subsequent years showed different and better results.

The examinations lasted three days, beginning with the theses of the senior students. All the professors and the other priests of the community were present, as well as the entire body of the students. The different essays were read on the second day and part of the third, and minor subjects were then disposed of. On the whole the examinations were highly satisfactory, and at the conclusion, the President, in a neat speech congratulated both professors and students on the results attained. On the following day all the professors met under the presidency of Father Ignatius, and drew out a list in order of merit, which was posted up in the recreation, showing each young aspirant the place he occupied as the result of the years work. It would be unnecessary to add that some were disappointed: equally unnecessary and perhaps uncharitable to give any names.

During the five or six weeks' vacation which followed the examinations, the students enjoyed to the full a well-earned holiday. Two or three walks in the week were arranged, and occasionally an "outing" for the entire day to some distance was managed. On these walks Father Ignatius was the life and soul of the party. He seldom missed any of them, and no one entered with greater zest and enthusiasm than he into whatever sports or games were engaged in. He seemed to be a young man again, so actively did he take part even in those amusements which taxed to some extent the most athletic amongst them. He was also in the habit of urging upon the students the necessity of not losing sight of the books altogether during vacation, and besides to give more than the ordinary amount of time to spiritual reading and devotional exercises.

The classes were resumed on the second Monday of September, the three last days of the previous week having been given to a short retreat, which Father Ignatius himself conducted.

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It has been our painful duty to chronicle on more than one occasion the loss which Mount Argus sustained by reason of the death of some of the members of the community, and the pain was the greater, as they were all called away in the very prime of manhood; but it was not until the close of this year, 1868, that the ranks of St. Paul's Retreat were reduced by apostacy from the Congregation.

A good deal has been said from time to time on what has been called "Apostacy from religion", but all writers have not arrived at the same conclusion. Some justify to a great extent, if not altogether, the apostacy under certain circumstances; others again, and especially those of the Italian School, offer no excuse at all. They hold that even sickness, which has been contracted or developed in religion, and which is almost certain to end fatally, should not be considered a justifying cause for returning to the world, though there should be a moral certainty of their regaining health by doing so. Let every care and attention, they say, be bestowed upon them, and failing a restoration to their former good health, let them be content to die in the religious institute which they had embraced. All this to be sure is very good, and even savours of the heroic. There are others again who do not draw the line so tightly, but who, whilst equally unbending and severe with regard to apostacy in general hold that there are some circumstances under which a return to the secular state may be allowed or even advised. The case of a religious for instance whose state of health is such as to entirely incapacitate him from the fulfilment of the duties of his order, and of which there was no knowledge until after his profession is amongst the number of those who may apply for their dimissorials; so too those whose absolute want of intellectual capacity unfit them for the work of the priesthood, and we might

add also those who through no fault of theirs become so unhappy in religion, that notwithstanding their best efforts to the contrary, they find it impossible to serve God in the religious state. They are candid and straightforward in disclosing their troubled state to their superiors; obedient and earnest in following the counsel received, yet cannot find peace, and ultimately leave. These are some of the opinions ventilated by the wisecracks, but as the points belong to the domain of dispute, we shall leave them without further remark.

The two who left Mount Argus and the Congregation this year were Father William Hogan, priest, and Conf. George Clarke, student. Fr. William was a native of Cork, where he was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, 1842. He was clothed in the habit of our Congregation in Morovalle, Italy, on the 12 April, 1860, and made his religious profession on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the same month in the following year.

His early career was full of adventure, so much so that it almost bordered on the romantic. It appears that in early life he believed himself called to a heaven-appointed mission, having for its object the entire reformation of church or state or both. Being without the means of carrying his dreams into practice, for he was without education or money, he thought, like the Knights of old, of travelling into distant lands, where he hoped to find the fair goddess of fame and fortune awaiting him with all the necessary equipments to attain the end of his desires. Accordingly at the age of eighteen he took leave of the fair city on the Lee, resolved that other and sweeter music than the "Bells of Shandon" should greet his ears in southern climes. Whether he passed direct from Cork to France or through England, we are unable to say, for the first event chronicled of him after leaving the parental home is in some city on the Italian frontier, which he was not allowed to pass, not having the necessary passport. How he managed to pass through France, has never come to light, for he was in blissful ignorance of the French language, as also of both Italian and Latin. But he succeeded. He succeeded too in eluding the vigilance of the frontier officials, and found his way into the Papal States. But it was to meet with another and a greater obstacle. As he was wandering aimlessly about the country without any papers to explain his presence or to testify of him in any way, and being at the same time unable to speak the language of the country, he was arrested by the police as a rogue and vagabond and thrown into prison. Here another difficulty awaited him. He could not understand why he was robbed of his liberty, as he could not understand the wording of the charges made against him; neither could his captors or jailers make anything of what he said in explanation or defence. Several experts were called with the object of finding out what language he spoke, but to all of them the English learned in "Cork's sweet Citie" was as unintelligible as if it were a voice from an antediluvian grave. He therefore became an object of curiosity as well as of fear to the guardians of the peace in those parts, and it would be difficult to say how the scene might have ended, had not good fortune sent some one that way, who, on hearing him speak, said he believed he must be English. The British Consul was at once communicated with and the matter was soon set at rest, at all events so far as regarded the discovery of his nationality. The Consul communicated with Mgr. Talbot, one of English speaking chamberlains of the Pope, then resident in Rome, who, having heard the prisoner's story, obtained from Cardinal Antonelli an order for his release. On his restoration to liberty, he proceeded to Rome, still under the protection of Mgr. Talbot. The story of his past life as well as of his future hopes, which he confided to Mgr. Talbot, was not at all satisfactory, with the exception that he expressed a strong desire to enter some religious order, and now, finding himself in Rome, declared that he would do so at once. He was a perfect stranger to Mgr. Talbot, however; he was without money,

without papers, without any recommendation but his own wild story, which after all might be nothing more than the raving of a madman. Whilst considering what was best to be done with this waif thrown so unexpectedly on his patronage, Mgr. Talbot happened to pay a visit to our retreat of SS. John and Paul. He told the story of his protégé to our Father General, and asked him to see the young man with the view of receiving him into the Congregation, should the result of the interview turn out satisfactory. A meeting was accordingly arranged, Mgr. Talbot acting as interpreter. So far the General was pleased, but would arrange nothing definite till the Monsignor had written to Ireland for certificates of Baptism and Confirmation and other necessary papers. This was done, and in due time the papers came and Mr. Hogan was received and sent to Morovalle to make his noviciate. He took the name of Patrick at his clothing, but this he was obliged to have changed on his return to these countries, as there was already a Patrick in the province. He then took the name of William, by which he was afterwards known. After his religious profession he was sent to a house of study, where for three years he combined the study of philosophy and Latin, and of course Italian, that being the only language spoken in the retreat. He then began the study of theology, and after eighteen months' theology he was by order of the general ordained Subdeacon. During all this time both in the Noviciate and the years which followed, he was very silent and uncommunicative even with his superiors, and his general conduct was at times so mysterious, as to be quite an enigma to those placed over him. However as he was obedient and industrious, and showed great anxiety to become a priest, his peculiarities were overlooked, and shortly after his promotion to the Subdeaconship, he was ordained Deacon. About this time the Father General was coming to these countries to make the usual visitation, and he selected as his companion, Father William, as his Paternity could not speak English. We have been unable to ascertain whether he was raised to the priesthood before leaving Italy or soon after his arrival in England, at all events he was appointed *de familia* of St. Ann's Retreat, Sutton, and soon after was placed in charge of Peasley Cross, which at that time was served from St. Ann's.

Then did the dreams of his early days begin to come back with re-doubled force. Like the pent-up stream, which, for years had silently and harmlessly flowed on from its source to the sea, had, when confined within banks, gathered strength sufficient not only to overflow the barriers but to sweep them away, so was it with the subject of our notice. The church, though not absolutely wrong, required reformation badly; the Pope and the Cardinals were not quite faithful to their trust; bishops and other dignitaries had lost to some extent the spirit of their vocation; but what most of all required the pruning-knife of the reformer was the religious orders. As this grand scheme was too formidable to undertake singly handed, he bethought himself of establishing a new order, first the female portion and then the men, and these were to be so successful and exemplary, that as a matter of course, all the already-established orders would at once follow in their footsteps, and so the desired end would be brought about. Whilst acting as pastor of Peasley Cross, he wrote the rules of the new order, after which he began to speak openly of his folly. Until then he mentioned the scheme only to a few sympathizers, but now there was no longer any necessity for concealment.

The first amongst the sympathizers belonged, as is usually the case, to the devout female sex, one of whom was a nun, and a teacher in the Peasley Cross Schools. The others were servants who, with the prospect of preferment in the new order, entered heart and soul into all his plans. He tried also to gain over to his way of thinking some of the young religious of St. Ann's, but to no purpose. There was

amongst his admirers however an old lady in the neighbourhood of Peasley Cross, whose sympathy and influence were calculated to make the undertaking a success. This old lady was very wealthy – possessing over twenty thousand pounds – had no near relations, and promised the “Founder” that all the money should go to him after her death. She died however without making a will; the next of kin came forward and administered, and so Fr. William found himself without the “sinews of war” After this his conduct and manner became very censurable, and in consequence of the trouble he was causing superiors and fellow-religious, it was considered necessary to remove him from Sutton. He was sent to Dublin. During his short stay in Mount Argus he was employed on one or two missions, but had to be sent home before the conclusion of the exercises, as he refused to work with his companions according to our rules on such occasions. Instead of doing the work assigned him on the mission by the provincial, he was preaching his wild theories about the general reformation of things ecclesiastical and his new order. Eventually he asked for his dimissorials, which were given him, and after obtaining an appointment as chaplain to a convent in the south of Ireland, and not giving satisfaction either to the ordinary or to the nuns, he left for America, where he got lost in the crowd.

Conf. George Clarke.

The other who left the Congregation about the same time as Fr. William was one of whom a different story must be told. He was a student, and one of whom great things were expected because of his religious fervour and his intellectual abilities. His secular name was Joseph George Clarke, and was born in London 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1844. He became a Catholic in 1865, having been received into the Church by Fr. Pius Divine on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January in that year. He was then a student in the university of Exford, and his career in that seat of learning promised for him a brilliant and successful future. After his reception into the church, he went to our house in Broadway to make a few days’ retreat. Whilst there he made up his mind to become a Passionist, and after the usual preliminaries, he was received by the Provincial. Accordingly he went home; settled his affairs; returned to Broadway, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May was clothed in the habit of the congregation. After his profession in the following year, he was sent to Highgate to join a class of students, who at that time were reading theology. He afterwards came here with his class on the occasion of the opening of the college. During all this time he was a model student and religious; most observant of every point of rule; beloved by superiors and companions, and very successful in his studies. To great amiability of manner he united all the characteristics of an English gentleman, and his early associations both in London and in Oxford gave him an ease and grace of manner which gained on all with whom he became acquainted.

About the middle of this year however his mind became completely unhinged, and he fell into a state of darkest melancholy; and he who up till that time had been so happy and contented in religion could now find neither peace nor comfort therein. Unlike Fr. William however he disclosed all his troubles to his superiors, and strove in all earnestness to obey, but all in vain. At last he was advised to apply for his dimissorials, which he did, and left the congregation. For some years after he left, he employed himself in the capacity of tutor in the families of catholic gentlemen, where he gave the greatest possible satisfaction and edification. He lived only a short time after his return to the world, but he lived and died a faithful child of the Church.

It would be difficult to find two men more widely apart in every walk of life than the two whose careers have been briefly sketched above, and yet so far as their

religious vocation was concerned, the end was the same. We would feel very much inclined to criticise the undue haste with which Fr. William was received and pushed on to the priesthood, particularly when his unsettled state of mind and wild ideas of religion in general could neither be mistaken nor misunderstood. As to Conf. George, the shameful hast shown in his case was little short of scandalous. He was received into the church in January, and into the congregation in the following May. Probably if he had not been a distinguished Oxford student it would have been different. He was considered too good a “catch” to permit of any delay. Religious bodies, with all their wisdom, sometimes show great weakness in selections of this kind. Much better both for Mr Clarke and for ourselves, had his catholicity been allowed to “season” before the additional burden of religion was placed on his shoulders. Experience has shown that such haste is sadly wanting in prudence and judgment, as we shall have occasion to show later on.

At the end of this year the number of students in the college was thirty six.

### 1869

The year 1869 opened with high hopes for the future of Mount Argus. The College was in full working order; a spirit of healthy rivalry urged its students on to the attainment of those ends of study which can only be found in a big centre of education, whilst hand in hand and side by side with these efforts went the observances of the Rule in all its details. The hard-working and zealous President seemed to have infused his own spirit into all his children. Little did they dream then that before the end of the year he would be lost to them for ever! The college became an advantage to Mount Argus in another way. During the twelve or thirteen years which had elapsed since the Passionists came to Ireland, they were, according to the custom of the congregation, in the habit of sending out one or more of the religious to solicit the alms of the faithful for the support of the community. These religious were always well received by the Irish people, both rich and poor, and assisted according to their means. But whilst this was the case generally speaking, there were some who could not understand the object of annual or periodical questing for what seemed to them the very vague purpose of “supporting the community”. Their idea was that a religious community should be self-supporting; that men had no right to come together for any object, and tax their hard-working co-religionists living in the world, with the obligation of contributing regularly to their up-keep. They looked upon mendicant orders, notwithstanding their assured and recognised position in the church, as men who could not to be sure amass fortunes or acquire wealth, yet they expected that they should not at all times and seasons be “sending round the plate”. But should this request for assistance have some specific object, then they could understand, - the building of a church, for instance, or a school, or a convent, or a religious house or institution of any kind – this was acknowledged as a just and a lawful claim, both because it was visible and so to speak, tangible, and because it would not be for all time. In the city of Dublin and probably elsewhere throughout the country the faithful were called upon year after year by the religious bodies to contribute towards the payment of what was and still is known as “Chapel rent”, and the response is always made without a murmur. Well too did the Irish people not only of those but of these days recognise the necessity of re-building those external evidences of Ireland’s Catholicity, for as deep down in their hearts as the faith which lives there, was and is their desire to restore to their country the ecclesiastical and monastic buildings which in by-gone days were the pride and the beauty of the Land.



Neither had the love of education died in the nations heart. The descendants of the Saints and Scholars who at one time attracted the lovers of sanctity and learning to our shores were equally anxious to see established in their midst centres and nurseries, wherein would be taught the same sciences which their forefathers cultivated and preached at home, and which was also the message brought by Ireland's apostles to lands beyond the seas. Thus when Mount Argus became an educational establishment in which the young men of the congregation would be trained to those works of mercy, which on retreats and missions were already doing so much good in the country, the people saw at once the reasonableness of the appeal and willingly identified themselves with the claim. By this time the Passionists and their work were pretty well known in Ireland, and when the questor could say that their alms were asked towards a perpetuation of these good works, the response was cheerful and liberal.

Notwithstanding this beneficial change however, Mount Argus was still labouring under a fearfully heavy debt. We have already noticed how the building of the new church came to a sudden and almost a scandalous stand-still. Though provision had been made to supply the want by adding to the old chapel, still the necessity of building even in the straightened circumstances was becoming every day more and more urgent. And no one saw this more clearly or felt it more keenly than the Rector, Father Alphonsus O'Neill. Filled with the spirit of conquest which we presume he inherited from the chieftains of his native Tyrone, he resolved not only to lift Mount Argus out of its existing difficulties but to complete the church, the building of which, through no fault of his, had been so ignominiously interrupted. After consultation with the higher superiors and the local chapter, it was decided to have recourse to a bazaar in order to raise the necessary funds. Bazaars in Dublin have been from time immemorial and still are not only a certain but a popular means of raising large sums of money in a considerably short space of time. One cannot say "popular" in the general sense of the word, for like all other good works from the days of our Lord downwards, bazaars have met with opposition from a pharisaical element who assume a right to criticise modern philanthropy, just as those of old said that devils were cast out by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. All the same though the bazaar should go on, and it was to be on a gigantic scale – a scale in proportion to the necessity of the occasion.

The first movement was to secure the assistance of benefactors and friends both at home and abroad, who by their money and their influence might ensure its success. This had been done some months before the beginning of the present year. A number of valuable prizes had been sent in, and a great many more promised, in order to induce the purchase of tickets.

Now as this is not meant to be a detailed history of the bazaar, but only a brief record of the event, we will notice the leading points only. Hundreds and thousands of tickets were printed and distributed – one might say over the whole world; religious were sent through Ireland, England and Scotland to dispose of them, and one, Father Lawrence Kiernan, went to America, to enlist the sympathy and catch the dollars of our yankee friends. Besides this the home work was of no ordinary importance. Rooms in the retreat were turned into showrooms and offices; students were employed in posting bundles of tickets to every available address, and otherwise attending to general correspondence. No doubt all this interfered very much with the regular routine of study and observance, and gave to the anti-bazaar advocates an opportunity of aiming their shafts of criticism against the whole undertaking. And indeed their remarks were to some extent true. The work of writing and answering

letters; the daily association with seculars, and the consequent dissipation, had the effect of destroying in a great measure that habit of study which had been so efficiently inaugurated some months before. Class was given at irregular intervals, and sometimes a whole week would elapse without any class at all, and even then the business was gone through in the most superficial manner. After the bazaar however things soon righted themselves, but whilst the excitement lasted, a great deal of valuable time had been spent if not lost altogether. Father Ignatius took little or no part in the bazaar. During the time of its progress he was often absent for weeks in Belfast, attending to the new foundation there, and the work for which he was responsible was discharged by Fr. Jerome Smith.

The Bazaar was opened in the Rotunda Buildings on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, and was surrounded and attended by all the confusion and excitement peculiar to such an occasion. There were drawings for this and drawings for that; drawings for special prizes and drawings in general, resulting as usual in much dissatisfaction to some parties, who considered themselves less favoured than their more fortunate neighbours. Nor did the dissatisfaction end with the bazaar itself. Prizes and rewards promised for work done had got so mixed up and lost, that interested parties hesitated not to make frequent use of the word “swindle”, and letters came in almost every day for weeks after, demanding compensation for time or money spent. Eventually things were settled somehow, but in many quarters impressions unfavourable to the Passionists remained for a considerable time.

We have been unable to ascertain the exact amount realized by the bazaar. The gross receipts were very large indeed, but the expenditure incurred was enormous. The result must have been in some degree disappointing, for the work of building the new church, for which the bazaar was ostensibly held, was not commenced, nor was it seriously thought of. But it is to be hoped that the proceeds went to the reduction of the standing debt, though how far this was the case we are also unable to say. The “Great Mount Argus Bazaar” however became a world-wide event, maybe it gave us a popularity which we could not otherwise have obtained, if it did not, it certainly obtained for us a notoriety.

When all was over the following letter was addressed by the Rector to the Freeman’s Journal :-

*The Passionists Fathers, Mount Argus.  
To the editor of the Freeman.*

*Dear Sir, - Allow me to return thanks for the interest you have shown, as a journalist, in our bazaar. I also avail myself of this opportunity to thank the public in general for their interest, which is by no means barren of results to our community. Especially I beg to thank the Lady Mayoress and the other kind and charitable ladies who presided and assisted at the tables, and to whose influence and self-sacrificing exertions we are in a great measure indebted for its success; also the Lord Mayor and gentlemen of the committee, including my assistant honorary secretary, and the committee of commercial young men who, for a period of four months, devoted their leisure hours to the interests and working of the bazaar. I owe a special debt of gratitude to one whose skill and indefatigable exertions have carried to a successful termination each of the many bazaars and charitable works with which his name has been associated for years in Dublin, and although he has not been officially announced in connection with this bazaar, he need be here named to be known.*

*Since we have in connection with the bazaar engaged of late a portion of public attention and drawn more largely on public charity, I beg leave to be allowed, whilst correcting an oversight in one of you notices of last week regarding the date of*

*our first foundation here, to admit the public to a share of domestic confidence by brief allusion to our position and resources, and trust that my doing so will not be deemed want of taste or propriety.*

*The Order of the Passionists was established in Ireland in the year 1856, and not (as stated) three years ago, by Father Vincent Grotti, the Hon and Rev. Charles Pakenham (Father Paul Mary) being first local Superior. The first founders, at the time of their arrival here, had no funds or fixed property of any description – they came under the kind protection of his Eminence, the present Cardinal Archbishop, relying solely on Providence and the well-known charity of the Irish people. God has amply rewarded them for their Trust.*

*When it was determined to build a suitable monastery or retreat (retiro, as our houses are called in Italy), a committee of gentlemen was formed, who determined that the new building should be – as were the ancient monuments of Irish piety and generosity – a structure worthy of Catholic charity, built to stand for ever: the structure thus planned grew up to its present shape. Whether it has answered the intentions of its originators or not, we leave others to judge; but it is now the college or principal house of the order in these Kingdoms, occupied by a community of missionary priests, professors and students. Charity helped wonderfully during the course of its erection, but still a heavy debt had to be contracted in order that the details first planned should be fittingly carried out. This debt pressed heavily upon us, and the support of the new college and its large community has not diminished the burden. Our new church – through the donations of benefactors, given for that specific purpose – is over the foundations, but with those heavy drawbacks it was not possible, nor would it have been prudent, to proceed further with its erection. From these statements it is obvious why the present efforts are being made.*

*The bazaar, thanks to our friends, has proved a perfect success. The proceeds of it and the “drawing” will lighten considerably the burden of our debts and enable us to advance our new church towards completion.*

*It is a source of deep regret that we are obliged to postpone the drawing at the eleventh hour, as such postponements create a least a feeling of disappointment, especially amongst those of the ticket holders to whom we are strangers. The postponement was unavoidable owing to an unforeseen occurrence which prevented the collecting of the duplicates of tickets sold in America and Australia. To proceed with the drawing without these duplicates would be an injustice to the ticket holders, to whom it would be impossible to refund the money paid.*

*Having had a communication on Saturday last from the Revd. F. Laurence, who has the managing of the American tickets, I am now enabled to state that the drawing will positively take place in the Round Room, Rotunda, on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1869, under the superintendence of the Lord Mayor and the other gentlemen of the committee.*

*The winning numbers will be published in all the papers named on the tickets on Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. The prizes will be delivered to the winners at Mount Argus, Harold’s Cross, on that and the following days.*

*I beg to refer your readers to your advertising columns of this day for the result of the drawings at the ladies’ tables during the bazaar; and with renewed expressions of deep gratitude to all who have contributed to the success of the undertaking, I remain, dear Sir, your obedient servant,*

*Alphonsus O’Neill.*

*Mount Argus, Dublin, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1869*

The drawing mentioned above came off on the day fixed, 8<sup>th</sup> June.

It was ascertained after the above had been written, that the gross receipts of the bazaar amounted to about £8,800.0.0

Expenditure about £1,600 - -

Net £7,200 .0 .0 \*

\* Should any reader doubt the accuracy of these figures, it may be some consolation for him to know that he shares the opinion of the man who wrote them.

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### 1869

The anxiety and excitement awakened by the bazaar did not subside with the drawing of the prizes – the last item in the programme. We have already noticed that some dissatisfaction and disappointment were expressed by some who had hoped that the turn of the wheel of fortune would have been more favourable to them; this however only concerned the superiors and those officials acting with or under them: the other members of the community were busy attending to the duties of their respective states.

The General and Provincial Chapters which were held this year aroused the usual amount of interest inseparable from such event, and though only a very small percentage were immediately concerned, yet even the “rank and file” looked forward with much concern to the probable results.

The General Chapter was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. As usual it was attended by the Provincial and his Consultors, and from the far distant Mt. Argus the eyes of many youthful aspirants to the priesthood were fixed on SS. John and Paul’s with the one desire that their beloved President, who was there in the capacity of first consultor, might not be elected to any office which would prevent his return to St. Paul’s. But what they hoped and prayed for did not come to pass: Fr. Ignatius was elected to an office which for all time severed his connection with Mt. Argus and Ireland. Father Dominic of the name of Mary was chosen General, but his election was not marked with any outburst of enthusiasm. No choice, no matter how popular, could brighten even the fringe of the cloud which fell on the whole Anglo Hibernian Province because of the loss sustained by its separation from the great and the good Father Ignatius Paoli.

The attention of Mount Argus, and especially of the students, was now turned towards the Provincial Chapter which was due in a few weeks. The office of President of the college was vacant, and the students were keenly alive to the fact that the appointment meant much for them. Though they were persuaded that the office would not be filled in every respect as it had been by the late president, still did they hope for the nearest possible approach to his standard of excellence. Nor had they long to wait. The chapter was summoned to meet in St. Ann’s Retreat, Sutton, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, and the result so far as Mount Argus was concerned, was that Father Pius Devine was elected Rector, and appointed President of the college. Father Eugene Martorelli was re-elected Provincial, and Fr. Alphonsus chosen Rector of Sutton.

The election of Father Pius to the Rectorship of S. Paul’s, necessarily created another vacancy in the teaching staff of the college. Since its foundation, he had been professor of Dogma and Sacred Scripture, but it would not have been advisable, nor indeed would it have been possible, for him to attend to the administration of so complicated a responsibility as Mount Argus, and give also that time and attention to

study which the charge of a class demanded. The vacancy however was soon filled. Father George Martucci, a young Italian priest, was sent over from Rome to take charge of the dogmatic theology class, and right well did he discharge the duties which he had been sent to undertake. Fr. George had been for some time teaching philosophy and theology in Rome before he was sent by the Fr. General to this province. He came to these counties without knowing a word of the English language, but so industrious was he, that before many months he was able to hear confessions in English, and make himself sufficiently understood by those to whom he addressed himself. He soon became a very popular confessor, and all his spare time was given to those penitents who sought his ministrations. At the same time he attended to his class work with the greatest possible punctuality. After three or four years' stay in Dublin, he was able to take his turn at preaching, and even to go on Missions, selecting as his part the Meditations on the Passion of the Lord.

Fr. George was less an Italian than most of those of that nationality who have lived amongst us, but he was never able to shake off altogether the many little ways which seem to be characteristic of the sons of the sunny south. To say that he was narrow-minded would not be stating an untruth; nor would it be a violation of veracity to state that he could not shake off that quality of suspicion and espionage which seem to be an inheritance of his countrymen. All the same he was hard-working, a good priest and a good Passionist, and made many friends in Dublin and left grateful memories behind him in Ireland. After nine years spent in this province, he returned to Rome, where his health, which had never been very robust, gave way, and he died of consumption on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1883.

The Chapter made other changes in the community. Fr. Sebastian Keens, who had been Vice Rector during Fr. Alphonsus' time, was elected Rector of St. Joseph's Retreat, Highgate, London, and in his place was appointed Fr. Pancras, Professor of philosophy; and thus began the next three years. \*(F. Salvian was appointed Vicar at this time. F. Pancras later on.)

It was not long before the students began to realize that a great change had taken place in the management and government of the college. Though the classes were given and attended with the same punctuality and enthusiasm as before, the want of the master-hand at the head of affairs was distinctly remarkable. For the reason that "comparisons are sometimes odious", it would not be charitable nor perhaps advisable to mention names, but as there was only one Fr. Ignatius Paoli in the province, or indeed in the Congregation, and as his worth was willingly recognized by all who knew him, it won't excite any feelings of jealousy, especially at this date, when most of the parties concerned have passed to their reward, to say in no sense was his place ever filled. Fr. Salvian was appointed director of the students after the chapter, but except in nationality, he had nothing in common with his predecessor. In many ways he was kind and even indulgent to the students, but his poor little mind was never capable of grasping or executing with any degree of nobility, even the smallest scheme, having for its object the improvement or advancement of things educational or intellectual. Besides he had the reputation of being in constant correspondence with the higher superiors, not only regarding necessary matters, but every little "fiddle-faddle" that came under his notice, so that whilst acting in the capacity of director, those under him, knowing that his views of most things were apt to be erroneously stated, naturally withheld from him that fullness of confidence which he would otherwise have received. His appointment therefore was never considered a success. He could not understand how young men should be trained on principles of honour and self-reliance, or how the idea of self-respect should control and regulate as

efficiently as the presence of a Superior: all these things according to his code of ethics savoured of the world, in which he pretended to have no confidence or belief. All the same they managed to get along harmoniously enough, for the students had been sufficiently impressed during the previous two years to know that a code of honour not the supervision of a “Scotland Yard” should preside over their conduct.

Another change took place about this time in the every-day life of the students, which in the beginning caused some amusement, but which soon ended in general dissatisfaction and confusion. Up to the present they had been in the habit of walking out in the secular dress, whether it was the ordinary weekly walks, or as sometimes happened, a longer walk for some distance in the country. The new Rector, Father Pius, would have all this changed, and ordained that in future the weekly or ordinary walks should be taken in the habit and sandals. To facilitate this new movement, each student was provided with a special style of hat, something not unlike a Spanish sombrero, also with a stout, black, cloth girdle, with which his loins were to be safely protected whilst walking abroad amongst the haunts of men. For a time the thing succeeded admirably, and it must be said that the religious were received with every mark of respect wherever they went. For the most part their walks were into the country, as it was not considered prudent to go citywards, or where there were crowds, amongst whom might be curious if not hostile admirers.

But the good Rector did not take into account the uncertainty for which the climate of our country is so remarkable: the quick transition from sunshine to shower which is so well known not only to natives but to visitors to our shores. The first few walks came off all right: the elements were good-humoured and indulgent; then came a walk in the direction of Tallaght one day, and though the “outward bound voyage” was in splendid weather – dry, warm and refreshing, the return was wet and unpleasant. The rain began near Fir-House Convent, and continued all the way home. The walking out in the habit lost some of its popularity on account of the wetting, but the decree had gone forth, and no change would be made. Most of the students with Fr. Salvian requested a return to the old style of marching but the Rector was inexorable. “We were living in a Catholic country: we were religious: we were not made of sugar or salt: why therefore not walk out in the habit? It must be!” “*Roma locuta est.*”

Very wet and broken weather succeeded the walk to Tallaght for some two or three weeks, so that there were no rambles beyond the college grounds, but with the return of clearer skies, the longer walks were resumed. Another interval of sunshine restored the hopes of the peregrinantes, and the drenching on the banks of the Dodder was fast becoming a thing of the past, when it was re-awakened in a manner never to be forgotten. It was towards the end of Autumn, and a Thursday. The forenoon had been dry and bright; not a leaf moved on the trees, nor could the most aesthetic desire a more hopeful invitation to spend the afternoon out of doors. “Get de hats, get de hats”, was heard from Fr. Salvian almost immediately after dinner, and the order was obeyed in a manner that would have pleased the great Wellington himself. The body of students walked in the direction of Dolphin’s Barn, passed Island Bridge, and were soon in the Phoenix Park, the weather still behaving in the most obliging manner. The Park itself looked its best, and though here and there amongst the trees might be seen evidences of the decline of Summer, they but added variety and consequently additional beauty to the picture. Charmed with the feast which nature had thus provided, the students with their venerable director passed from attraction to attraction until the whole Park had been explored, criticised and admired. Coming to the elevation overlooking Chapelizod, they sat down, both to rest and to gaze along the

valley of the Liffey which lay at their feet, and which, lover like, invited their admiration and their praise. It was then about six o'clock. Suddenly, as if surprised by an enemy, a short, sharp rattle of thunder burst over their heads, and in little less time than it would take to write it, the sky darkened and rain began to fall. The first impulse was to take shelter in some of the houses in Chapelizod, but this was overruled by Fr. Salvian, who after taking the opinions of some of the weather-wise amongst the students, thought it better to go straight home. They passed through the village and for some distance followed the main road along the south bank of the river, then turned to the right into the country by a road which some of those who knew the geography of the locality said was a "short cut", and would bring them to Mount Argus in half an hour. It was a long half hour however. When the footpath-less country road was entered upon, the storm began in real earnest. The thunder and lightning were terrific, and the rain came down in torrents. Some sought the shelter of trees – not a prudent movement in a thunder-storm; others the shelter of overhanging rocks and high walls, and others again hurried on for some distance and took refuge in an old barn or shed which had been used for cattle during the summer months. Darkness soon added to the misery of the evening, and this became the more painful as only a few of the students knew the way home. They remained in their respective hiding-places however until the rain cleared, and then renewed their journey to St. Paul's, the last contingent arriving after nine o'clock. Of course they were all wet, as if dragged through a mill-pond. Habits were soaked with rain and mud; mantles and hats were a load to carry, and as for underclothing, their state could only be described by the religious who afterwards superintended the washing of these unmentionables. Some of the more fortunate among the earlier arrivals, after having their creature comforts attended to, got off to bed as soon as possible, but the great majority were obliged to patronise the bath room, which was in full swing till long after midnight.

Next day the attendance both at class and in choir was very small, some of the students being obliged to remain in bed with severe colds, others again who were not rich enough to possess a second habit, and not wishing to appear in seculars, preferred the shelter of their cells until their garments were sufficiently dried. No permanent injury resulted from the drenching, but it had the effect – though not immediately – of putting a stop to the "fad" of walking out in the habit and sandals. Father Salvian petitioned loud and strong against "the poor boys" running any more risks, and the higher superiors were influenced by his representations. The new departure was condemned at home and abroad, and even some time before the new decree was withdrawn, ridicule had killed the innovation. And rightly so!

Towards the end of this year several of the students received orders, and some were raised to the priesthood. The diocesan examinations were passed with much credit, with which result the superiors were much pleased as they were the first fruits of the college. Ordinations were held in the church of the Carmelites, Whitefriars' Street. On the 18<sup>th</sup> September, when the following received Minor Orders:-  
Confrs. Fernando, Arthur, Angelo, Anthony, Leo, Camillus, Michael, Placid and Sylvester.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> in the same church, subdeaconship: Confrs. Basil, Malachy, Xavier, Martin, Peter Paul and Gabriel.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> Deaconship: Frs. Basil, Xavier, Peter Paul, Gabriel and Martin.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> Priesthood: Fathers Xavier Kelly, Peter Paul Smythe, Martin Byrne and Gabriel O'Hanlon. FF. Basil and Malachy were too young to receive any further

orders on the above dates. The orders were all given by Most Rev. Dr. Whelan, O.D.C.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> November, Father Basil Moubert was raised to the priesthood in our own church by the Most Rev. Dr. Durcan, Bishop of Achonry.

### 1870

The beginning of this year witnessed a new departure in the church services, and which like the plays and recitations already mentioned in connection with the students' annual examinations, was perhaps a novelty which had never before appeared in the whole history of the congregation. Amongst the other advantages which the college held out to the students, not the least was the time and attention given to the training and cultivation of the voices of those on whom nature had bestowed such a gift. Consequently the "singing class", which was twice a week, had to be attended with the same punctuality as the classes of philosophy and theology. It should be explained however that all were not bound to attend. There were a few among the students who had neither 'voice' nor 'ear', nor could the most sanguine hope that these accomplishments would ever be theirs, no matter how long or how earnestly they strove to acquire them, hence the music Master, Father Isidore Van Stalle, considered it a waste of time and energy to be striving after the impossible, therefore they were dispensed from attendance. But with the majority it was not so. Not only had they "ears" and "voices", but not a few of them could give a good account of themselves at both piano and harmonium. During the greater portion of the past year, they had been practising with great regularity and much success under the baton of the venerable Dutchman, so much so that the Rector desired that they should take charge of the singing in the church at all the services both Sundays and week days. The secular ladies and gentlemen who had been giving their services in the choir for a length of time previously were accordingly told that these services (though given gratuitously) would not be required after the close of 1869.

At twelve o'clock mass on the first of January the new claimants for vocal distinctions and honours took their places in the organ gallery, and many were curious and some anxious as to the manner in which they would acquit themselves. They had previously learned two or three simple masses, and the one in the execution of which they were to make their first public appearance, was known almost off by heart. The attempt was a success: the congregation were pleased. The Mass was simple, was ecclesiastical, and it was short. Perhaps the last quality was the one which recommended it most, though it might be quite correct to say so in speaking of a Dublin congregation, who have the reputation of being ardent lovers of music. All the same, like most other congregations, they prefer a short service in the church. At all events the efforts of the students were favourably spoken of by all those who were in the habit of attending Mount Argus. We may mention here that they remained in charge of the choir for nearly three years until after the provincial chapter of 1872, when Father Dominic O'Neill was elected Rector, and who some months after his appointment requested the students to retire in favour of a secular choir.

It will be remembered that on more than one occasion we have referred in these pages to the fearfully heavy debt on Mount Argus, and to the consequent anxiety to those who were responsible for the management of the place. It may be thought that this frequent reference to the subject is the outcome of a "hobby", but I assure you, gentle reader, it is not: in those days it was the constant theme of conversation, of exhortation, and the cause of much worry. The thousands realized by



the late bazaar had stifled the cry for a little while, but why for a brief period only cannot be satisfactorily stated, for at a comparatively early date this year, the wolf came barking to the door again. As there was not sufficient within doors to satisfy the cravings of the hungry brute, and as he must be driven away by some means, it was resolved to make another extraordinary effort to silence his demands. It has been mentioned that during the time in preparation for the bazaar, Father Laurence was sent to America to dispose of tickets, and otherwise as far as he could to ensure its success. On his return to Dublin, he spoke favourably of the reception given him by all classes and nationalities in the western world, so much so that he was asked to renew his acquaintance with Yankee-land, and ask Brother Jonathin to contribute towards the liquidation of our debt. Accompanied by Fr. Athanasius Rodgers, another member of the Mount Argus community, Father Laurence sailed for America in May. Their efforts were fairly successful but the proceeds of their begging mission were somewhat long in finding their way to Ireland, if we may judge from what might be called a crisis in the little financial world of Mount Argus, and which happened this year. Better not anticipate however.

Notwithstanding that our chronicle has already extended over fourteen years, the number of deaths which it has been our painful duty to record has been comparatively few. Whilst still in the infancy of its existence, the high hopes entertained of the future prosperity of the new foundation were shaken by the somewhat sudden death of its first superior, but though his loss was much felt on all sides at the time, the retreat nevertheless grew and prospered. A second and a third time did the angel of death visit Mount Argus, and each time claimed as a victim a young religious preparing for the priesthood. This year a similar selection was made in the person of Conf. Benignus Kavanagh, one of the senior students of the college. He belonged to the "London class", and would have been ordained priest with his class-fellows the previous Autumn, had not the state of his health interfered with studies. He had received minor orders however in London before the opening of the college.

Conf. Benignus was a native of Dublin, where he was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1845. Before going to our Noviciate, and whilst still almost a boy, he became an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and worked very hard amongst the poor, whom the Conference to which he belonged claimed as the recipients of its charity. He was clothed in the habit of the congregation on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1862, but shortly afterwards, on account of ill health was obliged to return home. His health improving, he returned to Broadway, and was clothed a second time on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, 1864, and made his profession on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the same month in the following year. After his profession, he was sent to St. Joseph's Retreat, Highgate, London, where he read his philosophy and part of theology, and as already noticed, came to Mount Argus with his companions in the Autumn of 1867. His health, which was never robust, showed signs of failing towards the end of '68 and during the following Winter and Spring, consumptive symptoms began to develop; and as other members of his family had already fallen victims to this disease, the Superiors began to fear that he too would soon have to yield to its unrelenting demands. He managed however to attend to his classes and most of the observance during the whole of '69 and part of '70, but during the May of this year it was seen that the end was fast approaching. His naturally lively disposition and manner however served him in good stead during his illness. Though scarcely able to walk, he would attend to all the day observance of the community, and it was not until within a few weeks of his death that he consented to remain in bed or in his cell. The end came rapidly; and though

perfectly conscious that he had only a short time to live, he was bright and cheerful to the last. His pure innocent life gave him confidence in those last moments, and his passage to a better was more like the return of a child to the home of its parents than the going into comparative uncertainty, which surrounds so many death beds. He always expressed a wish to die on a Friday: his wish was granted; he passed peacefully to his reward on the morning of Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of July. His remains were buried in the little cemetery in the ground of the college after the usual ceremonies prescribed by our Holy Rules. R.I.P.

It has been remarked that Conf. Benignus was of a lively disposition: he was so in an extraordinary degree. He was the life and soul of the students' recreation, and his fund of wit and story – most of which was original – made him at all times the centre of a happy circle. He was besides a remarkably happy caricaturist, such a one as would have made a successful contributor to Punch or some such periodical, and many of his sketches, whither from imagination or from real life, were faithful reproductions of the originals. He was not a member of the students' choir, which began its labours in the organ gallery early this year, but on a large sheet of paper, he sketched the front of the gallery, showing the students standing behind the rail, with the conductor, Father Isidore, in the centre, and so perfect was it, that most of the faces were easily recognizable, though terribly overworked in their efforts to sing. Father Isidore was quite a photograph. One or two more efforts deserve mention. One day in class the question of fasting and abstinence was being discussed. Father Pius, who was the professor at the time, was asking the opinions of the students as to how they would treat the obligation of abstinence in conterminous dioceses where the Lenten regulations differed, and whether a person living in diocese No. I where the use of flesh meat was forbidden on a certain day, could cross the boundary and dine on flesh meat in diocese No II, where its use was allowed. Whilst the students were giving their various opinions, Conf. Benignus, who sat at the end of the long table, was bus with his pencil, and when asked for his opinion, instead of answering, he handed Father Pius a sketch which he had just made. It represented a commercial traveller who had come that morning from a distant town, and who was seated at table in a hotel, on which a substantial breakfast was still smoking. The commercial man however instead of partaking of the good things set before him, was busy reading the Lenten pastoral of the bishop in whose diocese he found himself, and beside him on the table were other pastorals and opinions of theologians as to whether he could or not avail himself of the privileges of the diocese in which he was seated, whilst immediately him with a bundle in her hand, marked "more pastorals", stood the servant. She advised the guest if he meant to do any business in town today, to breakfast at once, for if he waited until he had read all the pastorals and opinions, the day would be gone. The result of the examination of the caricature from a theological point of view has not come down to us, but the opinion of the hotel servant had something to do with bringing the discussion to a close.

The other happened a few days before his happy death. He represented himself lying in bed, having just died a few moments before. He still held in his hand the candle which had been lighting during his last moments. Some of his fellow students were kneeling round the bed in an attitude of prayer; others again were examining the few books on the table, and one or two who had just possessed themselves of some "knick-knacks", which they had discovered in a drawer, were in the act of scampering away from the room with the prizes in their hands. So well and so faithfully were the faces of the different religious drawn, that their names could be easily mentioned by looking at the sketch. His genial presence and entertaining society were missed by his

companions for many months after his death, and for much longer was his memory held in benediction by all who knew him.

An unusual and much appreciated honour was bestowed on Mount Argus this year in the appointment of the rector, Father Pius, as Visitor-General to the American Province of St. Paul of the Cross. It was said at the time that it was not merely an ordinary visitation, but that as some things had got “out of joint” over there, Father Pius was entrusted by the General with the responsibility of putting them straight. What these crooked ways were we never heard, nor indeed does it concern us, for our yankee brethren are quite capable of looking after their own affairs, sufficient to notice here that the visitation gave satisfaction to all concerned, and Fr. Pius returned to Ireland in October, arriving in Mount Argus on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>.

We noticed at page 40 that a crisis took place this year in the financial world of Mount Argus. It happened during the absence of the Rector in America. Father Salvian, who was Vice-Rector under Father Pius, was left in complete charge during the sojourn of the latter in the far west, and we must suppose that it was owing to the inability of the pro tem Rector that the crisis came about. It would be no want of charity, nor indeed would it exceed the bounds of lawful criticism to say that Father Salvian’s appointment even for a few months, was a most injudicious one. Physically, intellectually, diplomatically, and in every other way, the job was too big for him, so when money sufficient to meet the demands ceased to come in, and business people clamoured for the payment of accounts, the little man got so frightened, that thinking Mount Argus was a sinking ship, he determined to take to the boats and leave the ship to her fate. Before actually doing so however, he called the community together, and with tears in his eyes told them that he had no money to pay bill, etc, etc. and asked them all to turn out on the following day, priests, students and lay brothers, and try to collect from their friends in Dublin and neighbourhood what might at least tide over the present difficulty. This was accordingly done, the religious going in twos and threes, and calling on every benefactor or acquaintance where they thought a shilling or a pound might be picked up, returning to the retreat late in the evening, not particularly well pleased with the day’s hunting. The result of the expedition had the effect of restoring comparative quiet, but only for a few weeks. The till was again empty, and again the wolf was howling at the door, but this time the courageous pro Rector resolved on a grand stroke of business which, if carried, would for all time release the Passionists from these too-oft recurring causes of worry and distraction.

Talk of the strained relations between powerful nationalities, and how endless strife was averted by wisdom and statesmanship such as the settling of the “Alabama Claims” or the “Behring Straits” difficulty, and the foresight and cunning displayed by the diplomatists engaged in these conferences, where the greed and anger of offending and offended nations were appeased, and they will sink into utter insignificance when compared with the master-stroke of policy by which Father Salvian chose to relieve the hard-working sons of St. Paul of the Cross, resident in Mount Argus. He actually went to the Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin and offered to hand over to him the Retreat and church and grounds of Mount Argus, if His Eminence would become responsible for the debts and liabilities of the place! Such a display of courage and loyalty is without a parallel in the world’s history, and after which surely no one will consider Fr. Salvian’s appointment a lucky one. The Cardinal of course refused to accept the offer, and told Fr. Salvian to go home and wait the coming of better times, and meanwhile to pray with more fervour and administer with more discretion. The incident was much talked of at the time, and for

a length of time afterwards was sneeringly alluded to by some as a specimen of our business capacity. Shortly after Fr. Pius' return from America, Fr. Salvian resigned the office of Vicar, and in his place was appointed Fr. Pancras Driffield. \*(The above account of the "crisis" is not quite correct, as was ascertained after it had been written: the offer of Mount Argus to Cardinal Cullen was made before the religious were sent out to collect. It was the result of that day's collecting which removed the difficulty.)

During the October of this year, the ranks of the students were still further thinned, not by the Angel of Death, but by a visit from that Angel or Archangel, which tradition says cuts off with his glittering sword those members of the Congregation who are unfaithful to their profession. This was the expulsion from Mount Argus and the order of Confr. Bonaventure of the Presentation. Conf. Bonaventure, whose secular name was Richard McCarthy, was a native of Cork, where he saw the light in May 1845. His early life was a somewhat chequered one, notwithstanding which, however, he succeeded in gaining admission to our noviciate in Broadway, where he made his profession on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1869. Before joining our Congregation he had been in more than one college or seminary in Ireland, studying for the priesthood, but somehow could never succeed in remaining in any of them more than a few months. Why he left these various seats of learning in the land of his birth was never exactly ascertained, but it ceased to be a matter of surprise to his superiors when they saw the character he developed after his profession amongst us. During his noviciate however he managed to keep pretty well in the background whatever peculiarities of temperament or shortcomings which he thought might lessen his chances of perseverance, though occasionally he showed signs of temper and want of the spirit of obedience, which made the superiors of the noviciate have some misgivings as to his vocation. But he was quite capable of deceiving them, and did. He "humbled himself to the dust" and promised an all-round amendment. After his profession he was sent here to begin his studies. Having read a fairly good course of classics in some of the colleges where he had previously been, also a little philosophy, he requested that he should join the theology class, as he said it would be a waste of time to read again what he had gone through so often and knew so well. The superiors of the college however thought differently, and it was the first time that the true spirit of the student manifested itself: he actually refused to join the philosophy class, thinking probably that as he was now a professed religious, he could do just as he pleased. The superiors took his refusal very quietly, and told him that he would get an opportunity of showing if he had read sufficient to entitle him to join the students in theology. Next day he was examined publicly in presence of all the students with the result that instead of being a well-read philosopher, it was found that he did not know even the first principles. He was told then that he must join the logic class, and was reminded by the Rector in no unmistakable language what were the obligations he contracted by his vow of obedience and warned as to a possible result, notwithstanding that he had made his profession, should he fail in the faithful fulfilment of these obligations. For some time after this things went on smoothly enough, but it was only for a short time. Father Salvian was still director. From the beginning Conf. Bonaventure took a dislike to Father Salvian, which was very wrong, for with all his shortcomings in other capacities, he was kindness and indulgence itself to the students. Conf. Bonaventure never availed himself of this kindness, neither did he for months ask Fr. Salvian for a single permission, or recognise him in any way. In fact he asked no permission of any kind, ordinary or otherwise. At last the crisis came. It was an understood thing between the Rector and the Director that the students made

the ordinary weekly "Culpa" to the Director, and received from him the usual admonition. On the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> October, when the students were making the usual culpa in the refectory, and when it came Conf. Bonaventure's turn, Father Salvian asked him if he recognised him as his superior, to which the other immediately replied, "No!" Fr. Salvian repeated the question, and in a voice loud enough to be heard by all present, the student answered, "Certainly not!" Next day the local Chapter was summoned by the Fr. Rector, and Conf. Bonaventure was expelled by the unanimous consent of the assembled fathers, and before the sun of the same day set Mr. Richard McCarthy was on his way to the home of his birth in the southern capital. He afterwards offered himself to the Cistercians, Mount Melleray, but remained there only a short time; next he tried Ushaw in England, but failed again. Eventually he went to America, where some bishop badly off for priests, gave him a short course of theology in his diocesan seminary, after which he was ordained priest, and appointed to a mission, where, as we have already said of another Cork man, he got lost in the crowd of the great western Republic.

Towards the end of this year an additional piece of furniture found its way into the little church. Since the church had been enlarged some time before and the sanctuary and altar had been thrown back, it was remarked by many attending the services, that the words of the preacher could not be heard distinctly from the altar in consequence of the chancel arch, which divided the body of the church from the sanctuary, and hence prevented the voice from passing. To remedy this difficulty, it was resolved to erect a pulpit, which should occupy a place almost immediately inside the altar rails. As usual the "hat was sent round", and in a short time a sum sufficient to meet the want was subscribed. The pulpit was very plain both in design and material, but elegant enough and sufficiently substantial to meet the requirements of the occasion. It remained in its place in the church as long as the old building remained in use. It was afterwards removed to England or rather to Wales, to ornament some of those short-lived foundations opened and undertaken by a Provincial, whose zeal exceeded his prudence, and its remains will probably be found over there on the Day of Judgment amongst the wrecks of Presbyterianism and Welsh harps. Sic transit Gloria mundi, and so too passes away from further notice the somewhat memorable year of eighteen hundred and seventy.

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### 1871

The year eighteen hundred and seventy one was in a way the most memorable that had yet taken place in the history of Mount Argus, or indeed ever after during the time that it was known as St. Paul's College. The prominence thus given was in consequence of the number of young priests ordained and sent forth to labour in various fields for the salvation of souls. No less than nineteen of the students passed the diocesan examinations with considerable credit for the different orders which the superiors considered them entitled to receive. The heart of the Congregation beat high at the success which attended her children in the college, and the saintly Father and Founder must have grown glad even amidst the joys of heaven, and doubtless he asked for additional and special blessings to attend the footsteps of his youthful representatives who were so soon to go forth to carry on and perpetuate the work which he had begun on earth. The ceremony of conferring orders began early in the

year – as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. After the usual canonical arrangements had been made by the Rector, he invited the Most Rev. Dr. Donnelly, Bishop of Clogher, to confer the orders, and also to spend a few days in the college. To this his Lordship gladly consented. He arrived here on the afternoon of the fifth, and on the following morning gave tonsure and Minor Orders to Confrs. Louis, Robert, Victor and Stephen, and Subdeaconship to Confs. Arthur, Fernando and Angelo. On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> Fr. Louis was ordained subdeacon, and FF. Malachy and Angelo, Deacons. His Lordship stayed with us for some days, and expressed himself highly pleased with his visit. He spent most of his time with the students, whose society he enjoyed very much. To add to his enjoyment the students got up a play which was gone through in the large recreation room. The play consisted of songs, instrumental music and a “nigger” scene, in which Confreres Anthony and Thomas took the principal parts. The nigger scene was played in character, and so natural and “darkie” like was it sustained, that his Lordship, who had been some years in America, and had seen the reality in his native element, declared that the imitation was perfect. There were also readings and recitations which were even more pleasing to the bishop, for he knew that the attention given to this department was with the view of preparing the young men for the future. Father Angelo having passed the examination for the priesthood, his Lordship was sorry that home duties, already arranged, prevented him from returning on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the day fixed for the ordination. The Rector however invited the Most Rev. Dr. McEvelly, Bishop of Galway and afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, to do the needful, and his Lordship consented. Father Angelo Kirby was ordained on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, and his Lordship of Galway, like his brother of Clogher, remained a few days in Mount Argus. There was also ordained to the priesthood the same day as Father Angelo, the young Dominican, Father Augustine Coveney, who afterwards became a distinguished member of that distinguished Order.

About this time it seemed wise to the superiors of the Province to open a preparatory class in some of the other houses, where the students direct from the noviciate could go for some time to study Latin and other necessary preliminaries before coming to the college. This branch of study had been in charge of Father Jerome Smith, but shortly after the opening of the new Retreat in Belfast, he was sent there, and no one had as yet been appointed in his place, nor was it considered necessary at the time, as the students were all pretty well advanced. But Broadway was turning out some new and comparatively raw material, which needed a little brushing up before forming the acquaintance of the Philosophers. Accordingly it was decided that St. Ann’s Retreat, Sutton, be made a house of preparatory studies, and Father Arthur, though only a subdeacon, was appointed professor. Father Arthur had finished his studies in Mount Argus, and as he had read a very distinguished course, and was still too young to receive any higher orders, he could thus be utilized to advantage in preparing the young men fresh from the noviciate for the college. It turned out however that the class continued in Sutton longer than had been originally intended, for thought it was only meant in the beginning to be a “feeder” for the college, after a year or two, when the college as such began to fail for reasons which we have already noticed, the students, instead of coming here were sent to Rome. The Roman experiment however not turning out a very happy one, it was decided that St. Ann’s should remain a permanent house of study, which it has continued to be till the present day.

The great ordination of the year took place in the month of May. Ten had passed the diocesan examinations for priesthood, but some were not the canonical age

till towards the end of the year; others again for full Minors. The Rector, Father Pius, made up his mind that they should receive all the orders for which they had been examined, and for which they had creditably passed. The difficulty however was to get a bishop. He applied to some, but all had diocesan engagements which prevented them leaving home at the time. Neither were any orders to be given in Dublin nor in the diocese, except the annual ordination in Maynooth. The Rector turned his eyes towards his Alma Mater, and called upon the President, Very Rev. Dr. Russell, the result of which was that the President invited the ordinandi to come to Maynooth, and that they would be welcome and hospitably accommodated during their stay. Accordingly the first "batch" left for the College on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup>. They received tonsure that evening and the four minor orders the following day. They were Confr. Polycarp, Cyril, Eustace, Norbert, Pacificus and Thomas. These returned home on Saturday, and their places were taken by those who were to receive sacred orders. All the orders were conferred by the Most Rev. Dr. Lynch, Co-adjutor Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Subdeaconship was given on the 28<sup>th</sup> and Deaconship and Priesthood on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Those ordained to the Priesthood were Fathers Malachy Graham, Louis Irvine, Fernando Saavedra, Anthony Carroll, Michael Watts-Russell, Placid Wareing and Sylvester McManus: Subdeacons, Stephen Magee, Leo Burden and Camillus Carter.

The newly-ordained returned to Mount Argus on the Tuesday evening, and all the young priests celebrated mass for the first time on the following day. It was a week of general rejoicing in the college, and it was right that it should be. The Rector, with a generosity which always characterized his dealings with the students, was liberal to a fault. Many of the relations and friends of the young priests – some of whom came from a distance – were present in the church at the first masses, and the first communions administered by them were to these friends, some to the parents. For them too it was a happy occasion, to see their sons standing at the altar and offering up for the first time the Holy of Holies. Nor were these friends forgetful of those material aids which go a long way towards securing a passing pleasure. During the whole week the refectory tables groaned under the abundance of good cheer provided and sent in by the generous and joyful friends of the newly ordained. One incident however deserves special mention. It is usual as is well known, that a young priest, when celebrating his first mass, is assisted by a senior priest, so that the rubrics may be faithfully observed, which in his anxiety and nervousness, the young celebrant might be liable to forget. On the occasion of Father Michael celebrating his first mass, he was assisted at the altar by his father, who was also a priest. The Reverend Michael Watts Russell began life as a clergyman of the church of England, but in comparatively early life, was, with his whole family, converted from Protestantism. After the death of his wife, he studied for the priesthood, and was ordained a few years before his son. The venerable priest came from England to be present at Father Michael's ordination in Maynooth; remained a few days afterwards in Mount Argus, and as we have said, assisted his son when celebrating for the first time.

Shortly after the ordinations and the few days' relaxation which followed, the classes to which the newly ordained belonged, were formally broken up, and some of the young priests were sent to different houses in the Province. One of the number however, Father Louis, volunteered for the far distant mission of Bulgaria. When Mgr. Paoli was appointed to that See, he learned even before taking possession of it, that there were not sufficient priests there to attend to the wants of the scattered population, and worse, that the diocese was depending on volunteers from other countries to keep up even that scanty number. His Lordship resolved to change all

this, as far as he could. With the permission of the Father General, he applied to this province for subjects, and Father Jerome Smith and Father Louis offered their services. Mgr. Paoli had known them while in this country, and knew also their capability as linguists, a very necessary accomplishment for the work to be done out there. Both left their native land with willing and light hearts, glad and rejoicing in the prospect of meeting again and working under their old professor, Father Ignatius. Shortly after his arrival in Bulgaria, the Bishop established a diocesan Seminary, of which Father Louis was the first president, and a few years afterwards was able to supply sufficient labourers for the work of the district. Like all else which the good Prelate had ever undertaken, it succeeded.

Though our chronicle is supposed to be a record of events taking place within the walls of the Retreat, it is not out of place to go outside the enclosure occasionally to take note of what though happening in the world, may directly affect the well-being of the community. Such an event occurred on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October of this year in the death of James Kavanagh of Rathlands, whose house and property immediately adjoin the grounds of Mount Argus. Mr. Kavanagh was one of our first benefactors after we came to Dublin, and continued to be up till the time of his death. Not only were his subscriptions towards our support frequent and generous, but his workmen and horses were all the year round at our disposal, whenever it was necessary to have work done on the grounds of the retreat. Alike in Spring and in Autumn the labour was attended to, and so unostentatiously and quietly, that it seemed as if he were receiving rather than conferring a favour. He would sometimes confer favours without even consulting the Rector. If he saw for instance that the avenue leading to the church or the space in front of the church or the retreat required mending, gravel or coarse sand would be supplied at once, and sometimes in the early morning even before the religious would be about. It might indeed be said that his kindness to us was unceasing, and the grief felt at his death was really in proportion. It has been frequently said that religious are ungrateful, and it has been said that Passionists are particularly so – “omnia rapiens et nihil dans” – but in the case of Mr. Kavanagh, it was not so. Every member of the community felt that a great friend had been lost. Nor did it lessen their grief that the deceased was a very old man at the time of his death, and that according to the ordinary laws would not live much longer. He was attended by one of our fathers during his last illness, who had permission from the parish priest to administer the last Sacraments, and he was fortunately present at his bedside when he breathed his last. His death was like his life, full of faith and confidence in God whom he loved and served so well. His remains were removed to our church on the evening of the third, and on the following morning there was the office of the dead and solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of his soul, after which the interment took place in Glasnevin Cemetery. The funeral was the largest seen in the neighbourhood for many years, amongst whom were many poor to whom deceased had been a generous benefactor during his lifetime. God blessed him liberally with the good things of this life, and he used them for the noblest purpose to which such gifts could be applied. R.I.P.

On the 25 of this month – October – Father Athanasius Rogers returned from America, and on the 11<sup>th</sup> of the following month, Father Lawrence, his companion collector, also arrived. Their mission was fairly successful, but what the net figures were I am unable to state: at all events the result of their efforts kept the ship floating for some time longer.

Another defection from the ranks of the students took place this year, though it was a loss that no one seemed to regret, indeed the sympathy of the entire community



went out to the poor boy who left. His name in religion was Benedict of St. Joseph, in the world, Edmund Burrows. He was a native of Dublin, and belonged to a very respectable family, whose social standing at one time was of the Merrion Square aristocracy, but like many other things Irish and Dublin, had to submit to a reverse of fortune. For a variety of reasons every one was glad that he left the Congregation. In the first place it was believed by all including himself, that he never had a vocation to the religious life, and again he was intellectually weak, so much so that he could never succeed in becoming a priest. He was sent to our noviciate in Broadway by one of our priests, whose zeal outran his prudence or discernment, and though he was assured at the time by the young man himself, that he had no vocation, he was told by his Rev. Director, that "if he prayed hard, the vocation would come later on." The boy's father was also anxious that he should become a religious and eventually a priest, for the twofold reason, that, like every Irish parent, he wished to see his son serving the altar, and secondly, his circumstances being so reduced, he saw no other way of giving his son a position or profession. The boy, being exceedingly pious, believed what the priest told him, and prayed and waited for the vocation, but it came not. He managed however to pass through the noviciate, and after his profession, was sent here to begin his studies. But he had no aptitude for learning even the most simple rudiments. What he learned one day would be forgotten the next, and though he was two or three years in Mount Argus, he never got further than the last place in the junior class. All this time he was unsettled and unhappy, but was afraid to leave, as he knew he would incur the displeasure of his father, whom he knew to be unable to make any provision for his future, should he return home. At last he was asked by Father Salvian to write for his dimissorials, which he did, and left the Congregation with the best wishes of all. After some time he went to Australia where he succeeded in making a livelihood, and from which he subsequently wrote to some of his former companions to say that he was quite happy. His poor father felt his leaving very much, but when all the circumstances were explained to him, he became in a great measure, reconciled.

Towards the end of the year another ordination took place in our own church. Two students were raised to the priesthood, Fathers Victor Carolan and Camillus Carter. Father Arthur received Deaconship, but was still too young to be ordained priest. The orders were conferred by the Right Rev. Dr. Whelan ODC, Bishop of Bombay, on the 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of December.

During the year two very successful retreats were given in the church, one for men, the other for the devout female sex. Both retreats were conducted by FF. Pius and Pancras. An attempt was made to give a private retreat to some gentlemen in the house, but it was a great failure. Such attempts invariably fail amongst us, and it is probably or perhaps principally owing to the fact that we have no one to look after the wants of gentlemen staying in the house, and the treatment which they almost always experience contrasts so unfavourably with what they are accustomed to in their own homes, that they seldom or never make a second trial, except in individual cases. Our dinner hour is too early for men living in the world, and it is well known amongst ourselves how difficult it is to get either a meal or attendance later on in the day. One might feel inclined to pursue the consideration of this subject to a point which might result in comparisons that would probably be displeasing, so we will close the year's chronicle without any further remarks.

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We have frequently travelled outside those lines which a critic would say ought to confine the remarks of any ordinary chronicler, and in self-defence have been obliged, sometimes to apologize, sometimes to explain why this liberty has been so frequently taken. That we have been placed at a great disadvantage has been stated over and over again, for the reason that the record of events set down in these pages had in a great measure to be furnished from memory, or from subsequent jottings, which of their very nature were equally uncertain. Not that the year whose events we are just now attending to was wanting in interest both from within and without, as well to the ordinary Irish Catholic, as to the religious living in Ireland – indeed it might be said of this year that like its immediate predecessors, it witnessed a sort of crisis with regard to things religious in this country.

Though the disestablishment of the Protestant church in Ireland was now two or three years old, the effect of the movement as a religious or political event, was still eagerly watched by many, though from different standpoints. How would disestablishment eventually affect Catholicity in Ireland, or would it at all interfere with the status of religion in the Country? These were questions which were often asked, but only time, which gives experience and maturity to judgment, could supply the answer. For years before the Act of Disestablishment became law, the opposition which Catholicity and things religious met with from Protestantism, was not at all of a very determined character. Safely sheltered within the establishment, it felt perfectly safe from the inroads of Popery, and though it may have viewed with a jealous eye the daily increasing growth of the old faith in the old land, yet Protestantism cared not, for its existence was sufficiently guaranteed by the power which held the purse-strings of the nation's wealth. The parsons lived comfortably if not luxuriously at home during the week, prepared one or two discourses which were delivered from the pulpit on Sundays; draw their respectable and in many cases "fat" stipend every three or six months, and so sail down the ocean of life, realizing even here below the ideal of the millennium. The old churches which had survived the wreck of the persecution period were theirs; the extensive glebe lands with their parochial houses and their splendid emoluments were sufficient to sing to happy sleep their cosey occupants, who under other circumstances might assume a spirit of greater antagonism towards their less favoured neighbours. And so in the springtime of their life, as in the noonday of their manhood, did they hope to slow into the terminus of an evening, whose calm and picturesque sunset would betoken the quiet and tranquillity with which they hoped to lay down their arms in death.

The disestablishment however took all the poetry and sentiment out of this favoured state of existence, but not with regard to privileged individuals. The Act provided for existing beneficiaries or incumbents, and made allowance for those who at any time were children of the established faith; but with the departure from this life of these privileged folks, things would be entirely different.

Here where the difference comes in, with regard to established and disestablished Protestantism. Established Protestantism had only to fulfil customary duties, draw its liberal salary, and leave the world to go its way without let or hinderance. In the case of bigoted individuals it was somewhat different though, but in general they were anxious "to live and let live", provided the "bread and cheese" were not jeopardized. Disestablished Protestantism however was quite the opposite. The miserable pittance allowed by the Sustentation Fund Committee was scarcely sufficient in many instances to keep the "wolf from the door", hence the desire to

extend their territory and increase by fair or foul means the number of their adherents. This necessarily aroused a new and aggressive spirit between parties, which was still further awakened on the side of the offensive party by the fact that catholicity was making its way by leaps and bounds in the country. The Catholics made no secret of the joy they felt on the removal from their midst of the standing insult to their Creed and nationality which confronted them at every step in the shape of well-fed parsons and their equally highly pampered wives and fair-haired daughters. But the removal of the material support which the professors of the old religion were obliged to contribute towards the nourishment of this Upas Tree in their midst, was of all others their greatest source of contentment. Sufficient for their slender means was the rebuilding of their own churches and religious and educational establishments throughout the country, without being taxed with the upkeep of a generation and a system which was repugnant and alien alike to their patriotism and to their faith.

This change of front not only supposed but imposed additional duties and obligations on the religious bodies, and they proved themselves equal to the occasion. The system of giving missions and retreats was now part and parcel of the ecclesiastical machinery of the country, and the establishment of sodalities and confraternities in almost every parish in Ireland was like a network not only keeping alive the spirit of religion, but also checking and controlling the inroad of the enemy. And in this crusade pro Deo et patria, the Passionists played no unimportant part. Since the canonization of our holy Founder in 1867, and the celebrations of the following April, consequent on that happy event, an impetus and popularity were given to our work in these countries which seemed little short of the miraculous. The eloquent preaching and almost superhuman exertions of such missionaries as Fathers Joseph Carroll, Alphonsus O'Neill and Columban O'Grady, were not only winning golden opinions throughout the country, but what was better still, winning back to God many souls from the paths of sin and indifference. And so the disestablished church, which was now forced in some measure to earn its own bread in Ireland, was confronted with the efforts of the children of St. Paul of the Cross, who, in common with the other religious bodies, proved themselves worthy of the mission with which they were entrusted.

Early this year the religious of the province were thrown into a state of anxiety and sadness, caused by the serious illness of the venerable Provincial, Father Eugene Martorelli. For some days before the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, he had been complaining, but was able to be about as usual, but on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> he was unable to leave his bed. The doctor was called in at once, and after a thorough examination of the patient, said that though there was no immediate danger, he feared further developments, which, considering his constitution and age, might lead to serious results. Though the physician was in constant attendance for the next few days, Fr. Eugene became gradually weaker, and on the 11<sup>th</sup> he advised the assistance of another doctor, with whom he wished to consult. The result of their consultation was that they feared the sick man would not recover, nor had he in their opinion many days to live. On the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> he received the last Sacraments, and with such lively faith and devotion as to be a source of edification to the community who were sorrowfully kneeling in the room. Telegrams were at once sent to the different houses of the province, informing the respective Superiors of the Provincial's state, and the first Consultor, Father Bernard, who had just arrived that morning from Paris, sent an additional wire, ordering a Triduum with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and special prayers for the recovery or happy death of the venerable invalid. The Triduum

began on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup>, and strange to relate – though not strange when looking at it from other than a human point of view – about the time that Benediction was being given, the sick man fell into a quiet sleep, from which he awoke some hours after, much refreshed and decidedly better. Before the end of the Triduum, the doctor pronounced Fr. Eugene out of danger, and though he was not a Catholic, whilst he naturally attributed to professional care and skill the patient's restoration to health, he honestly admitted that he could not deny what he believed to be the presence of the supernatural. Day by day his strength increased, and after a few weeks, to the great delight of his children, he was able to resume his duties as Provincial.

The next important event of the year was the VI Provincial Chapter, which, like many of its predecessors was held in St. Ann's Retreat, Sutton. It differed however from any or all of its predecessors in this respect, that it was presided over by the Superior General of the whole Congregation, Fr. Dominic of the Name of Mary. The Chapter met on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, and resulted in the election of Fr. Bernard O'Loughlin as Provincial and of Fr. Dominic O'Neill as Rector of Mount Argus. There were no special decrees made in this Chapter, excepting some "directions" to the Superiors regarding the better administration of things temporal. Also that all houses in the province, Broadway and Sutton excepted, should contribute fifty pounds a year towards the support of St. Paul's College.

During his stay in these countries, the General made a Visitation of all the Retreats in the province, of which nothing beyond the ordinary results have come down to us. Everywhere he went he expressed himself pleased with the work that was being done, both with regard to our missionary labours, and the parochial work which we had undertaken in several of the houses. He recommended strongly that as far as possible the observance should be kept in these Retreats, but on no account, since we were responsible for the care of souls, should they be neglected.

His Paternity's visit to this retreat possessed (*more?*) than ordinary interest. It was the Alma Mater of the province, without parochial responsibility, and naturally he looked forward to a home in which he would find a well ordered combination of intellectual development and religious discipline. He had heard much for and against the college, even in the far-distant Italy; that it was the nursing mother of a spirit much opposed to that of our holy Father and Founder, and which might eventually introduce amongst us, much if not everything that would be purely secular. Again he had heard that such was not the case, on the contrary, that in no retreat in the entire Congregation was the Holy Rule so carefully observed, and that not even in Rome itself were such successful efforts being made to equip the young men of the order for the faithful fulfilment of those duties with which they were to be entrusted in after life. With these conflicting reports and opinions it was but natural to suppose that the General was anxious to see for himself. He was the duly elected Head of the entire body, and it would be his duty as such to correct any abuse he found in the college, or, if none existed, to give his blessing and additional approbation to the existing state of things.

The General, who was accompanied by the newly-elected Provincial, Father Bernard, and by Father James, his secretary and companion, arrived here on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, and was received by the Rector and community in a manner befitting his dignity and position. He seemed pleased with the reception, but it would not be difficult to detect an expression of countenance which gave the beholder the idea that he entertained some doubt with regard to its sincerity. His Paternity was a thorough Italian, and hence probably found it difficult to get rid of old impressions; but he was

besides a far-seeing and strong-minded man, who, if he could not set aside national prejudice or weakness, was able for the time being to keep them entirely in the background, and patiently await results for their refutation on confirmation. During the few days immediately succeeding his arrival, he saw everything that could be seen in Mount Argus. Sometimes he spent his recreation with the students, and again with the professed religious; at another time he would be round the grounds, making himself acquainted with everything that grew in the garden, and all this time, though he seemed not to observe anything he left nothing unnoticed. He was in constant attendance in the choir, and paid frequent visits to the church, and yet he never gave public utterance to a single impression made upon him, not until his final address to the community before leaving.

It just happened that the General's visit to the college synchronized with the annual examination of the students, and it is needless to say that more than ordinary importance was attached to it in consequence of his Paternity's presence. The teaching staff of the college had thrown themselves heart and soul for weeks before into the work of preparing their respective classes for the occasion, and the students responded with an industry and a willingness that was healthy and encouraging to witness. A few of the students in each class were told off to prepare theses on different subjects, and the young disputants were given to understand that they would be at the mercy of the whole board of examiners. They were also told to be particularly watchful of Father James, the General's secretary, who beside having the reputation of being a clever theologian and philosopher, was also extremely fond of "riddling" those who came before him in debate.

Talking to this Father James, or Padre Giacomo, it must be recorded that he left a very unfavourable impression behind him in the province. His personal appearance was somewhat forbidding, or, at all events, not attractive, for though he tried to smile and look pleasant, the smile was too artificial to be sincere. He endeavoured to speak kindly in the little broken English which he had learned, and when words failed him, he would finish the sentence with a shrug of the shoulders and a sneer which almost looked like contempt. He was to be found in every part of the house, and at all times. No corner was too dark or unfrequented for him; no seclusion too privileged or secret to escape him, and thus he spent his time, except when in the General's room, where he was a frequent visitor. No wonder then that he was feared and distrusted. After his return to Rome, he wrote a book which brought him under the notice of the Congregation of the Index, and nearly within the walls of the Inquisition. He was allowed off after making a public retraction of its errors, and was absolutely forbidden to teach either theology or philosophy during the remainder of his life. A just retribution!

The examinations began on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, and lasted two entire days. Besides the General, Don Giacomo and the Rector, there were present on the bench of examiners, all the professors, and some of the priests of the community. Before the proceedings began the students presented an address to the General, which was read by one of them. It was written in Latin, and ran thus:-

*Reverendissime Pater,*

*Non parum gaudii nobis adfert, to post labores nieper in capitulo provinciali feliciter transactos, ad collegium nostrum invisendum et opus in eo peractum inspiciendum advenisse. Theses sequentes e variis disciplinis quibus students his incumbunt, excerpt id saltem efficient ut, sacram eruditionem e fontibus sanae doctrinae haustam fideliter tradi ediscas. Non enim tibi lalet quanti intersit adolescentium mentes doctrina sacra acque ac pietate imbui.*

*Ipse primus, Reverendissime Pater, Praepositi Generalis Praesentia collegium his erectum honorasti. Nemenim tamen latet, te, quamvis absentem, sollicitudinem hujus collegii alumnorum cocumque in studiis, profectus, indesinenter gessisse. Futurum insuper speraumus ut excercitiones modo havendas hanc sollicitudinem tuam augeant ipsumque collegium tut patrocinio et aestimatione magis magisque dignum ostendant.*

Immediately after the reading of the address, the work of the examination commenced, and first of all the theses, sometimes one examiner objecting, sometimes another, and occasionally the General himself. The genial Giacomo sustained the reputation which had preceeded him. He objected to almost every thesis, and it was quite plain from the questions he put and the way in which they were worded, that instead of finding out how much the student knew of the subject, his object was to puzzle and confuse him, and then with his contemptuous gesture, leave him. Frequently the General and some of the others, especially Father George, came to the relief of the student, and by putting the objection in an intelligible form, invariably got a satisfactory reply.

The following were the subjects of the different theses and the names of the students who defended them:-

“De Ecclesia”, by Conf. Ambrose Graham.

“De Deo”, by Conf. Wilfrid O’Hagan.

“De Trinitate” by Conf. Reginald Magee.

“De Incarnatione” by Conf. Eustace Rothwell.

“De Eucharistia” by Conf. Norbert McGettigan.

“De Scriptura” by Conf. William Wells CL.L.D.

“De Logica” by Conf. Aloysius Fritz.

“De Psychologia” by Conf. Kevin Toner.

The second day was chiefly spent in examining specimen sermons, the students reading them slowly, whilst Father Pius translated them for the benefit of the General. The verdict of those capable of judging was most satisfactory, the thesis of Conf. Wilfrid receiving special praise. Both professors and students were delighted with the result.

The day after the examinations, the community assembled in the students’ recreation to present an address to the General. The room was tastefully decorated with evergreens and mottoes of welcome, and at one end a chair was placed on an elevated platform, which his Paternity occupied during the reading of the address. The address was written in Latin, and beautifully illuminated by one of the students, Conf. William Wells. (No copy of this address was taken at the time, and as the General brought the original with him to Rome, we are unable to reproduce it here.) It was read by the senior student, Conf. Polycarp Clifford, who presented it to his Paternity. The old man seemed much moved during the reading of the address, and particularly so when he rose to reply. He spoke in Latin, which he did with great ease and fluency. He spoke of the great pleasure it gave him to visit Mount Argus, and to see for himself the work which was being done for the Congregation. And not the least portion of that pleasure was the happiness of being present at the examinations, the result of which impressed him with the certainty that the good work of the Passionists would be faithfully attended to in the future. He praised both professors and students, and assured them that he would carry back with him to Rome, not only the handsome address just presented, but the recollection of some of the happiest days of his life.

After a few words of encouragement to all, he exhorted the students to attend earnestly to the cultivation of the mind so as to be able to fulfil their duties as priests, and also to strive after their own sanctification as prescribed by our Holy Rule.

Before leaving the college the General told the Rector that it was his desire that some of the senior students should be promoted to sacred orders. After consultation with the professors, a number was selected, whose names were sent to the Archbishop's Secretary, with the view of being examined for the different orders at the next Diocesan examination. Some of the students thought this rather hard, as it deprived them of the usual vacation but the prospect of receiving Holy Orders made them, for the time forget the disappointment. They all knew very well that an examination meant by the Dublin Diocesan Board of Examiners. Not only was it severe and searching, but they had the reputation of being particularly hard on regulars. Consequently they threw themselves into the work of preparation, determined not only to pass, but to pass creditably. The examinations were held early in September, in the parochial house, Booterstown, the residence of Canon Forde, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese. The Canon was the Chairman of the Board, and as he was too unwell at the time to come to Dublin, the students had to go to his house. The all-round result of the examinations was fairly good; only three however passed for the priesthood, Confs. Eustace, Norbert and Pacificus. When the result was made known by letter from Canon Forde to the Rector, the students began their retreat in preparation for the ordinations. As there were no general ordinations in the diocese at this time, the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev. Dr. McGettigan, was invited to confer the orders. His Grace at once consented. The first of the orders were given on Saturday, the 21<sup>st</sup>, when Subdeaconship was conferred on some, others receiving Tonsure and Minor Orders. On the following day, Sunday, FF. Eustace, Norbert and Pacificus received Deaconship. On that day week, the 29<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the glorious S. Michael, the three deacons were raised to the dignity of the priesthood. The little church, which has long since passed away, was crowded to suffocation on the occasion. For all present the ceremony was an unusually solemn one, but it was particularly so for the three ordinati, to whom was given the awful power and responsibility of "binding and loosing", and of offering on the altar of God the unbloody sacrifice of the New Law. His Grace the Primate returned to Armagh on the evening of the same day. The following short notice of the ceremony appeared in the Freeman's Journal of the next morning:-

*College of S. Paul of the Cross, Mount Argus*

*On Sunday, the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, his Grace the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, conferred the sacred order of priesthood on three young levites, members of the Congregation of the Passion, in the Church of S. Paul of the Cross. The three Fathers thus elevated to the sacerdotal dignity were the Revd. Eustace Rothwell, the Revd. Norbert McGettigan (nephew of his Grace the Lord Primate) and the Revd Pacificus Farrell. The temporary church, which has recently been decorated, presented a beautiful appearance, and as his Grace proceeded with the solemn rite, and especially when he imposed hands upon the kneeling candidates, the effect was imposing in the extreme, and the large congregation in the church was deeply moved. The Archbishop had during the previous week conferred the Order of Deacon on the Rev. Robert Graham, and that of Subdeacon on the Rev. Polycarp Clifford, the Rev. Cyril Doherty, and the Rev. Thomas Byrne, Passionists. His Grace at the same time conferred minor orders on nine Passionist students.*

The day of the ordinations and the next day, when the newly ordained celebrated their first masses, were holidays in the college. Much was made of the occasion by the Rector, Father Dominic, to show the joy and gratitude the event called forth. The refectory was in the hands of the students, and the taste and skill displayed in the arrangement of evergreens and appropriate mottoes gave universal satisfaction. The three young priests occupied the senior places in the refectory, said the prayers before and after the meal, and afterwards in the recreation, presided over the distribution of the good things which had been provided for the occasion. After a few days the work of study was resumed with its former regularity. The class to which the newly ordained belonged went on as usual until the following Spring, when it was formally broken up, and the young priests sent their different ways to take their part in the work of the Congregation.

About this time Father Salvian was appointed Master of Novices, Father Francis Bamber, who had been elected a few months before by the Provincial Chapter, having resigned. The students were very sorry to lost their old director, who, notwithstanding his many wee ways, was extremely kind and considerate. His place was filled by Father Martin Byrne, a young priest ordained only a short time before. He succeeded fairly well in following in the footsteps of his predecessor, so much so that ere many weeks the students had forgotten the change.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November Fr. Martin's Feast Day, the new director took the students for a long walk, and on their return were entertained to a gaudeamus, which, as we shall see, had a very uncanonical if not a scandalous ending. Whilst at dinner in the refectory after their return home, some of the students began to indulge in "horse-play"; this led to angry words; the angry words eventually led to blows, which were dealt out regardless of consequences. Needless to say the joyous character of the evening was soon spoiled, and the offending parties were ordered to their rooms to await the result of the local chapter which would be summoned to investigate their misconduct.

The chapter met the following forenoon, and after a thorough investigation of the students' conduct the evening before, recommended that four of their number be expelled. Their names were Conf. Ignatius Hilton, Alexius O'Leary, Innocent Mee and Kevin Toner. They were all young students, none of them being in orders, even minors. Conf. Kevin however was offered the chance of remaining in the Congregation on account of his youth and the provocation which it was said he received from some of the others. The decision of the Chapter was forwarded at once to the Provincial, who, after advising with his Consultors, sanctioned the finding of the Chapter. Alexius and Innocent left for America shortly after, where they became secular priests, and are doing good work for the church in that country. Ignatius returned to his native Lancashire, and soon began to work at some trade which he had learned before he became a religious. In course of time he "took unto himself a wife", and eventually got lost in the big crowd. It was better both for himself and the Congregation that he returned to the world, as he was intellectually unfit to become an efficient priest. He should never have been professed except as a lay brother.

Conf. Kevin was allowed to remain, but received a penance from the Provincial which he discharged in what seemed to be a spirit of willingness and humility. Better however had he been allowed to leave with the others. His violent temper which as was ascertained afterwards, led to the row in the refectory, frequently broke out during his student days, and even after he became a priest, and at last culminated in his departure from the Congregation. After leading a somewhat aimless



life for a few years, he received an appointment in the diocese of Newcastle in England, where he is at present.

Another student, Conf. Andrew Grew, left the Congregation this year, but some months before those mentioned above. Conf. Andrew was a very good religious, but a very poor student. He joined the Congregation rather late in life, and his early training, which was purely commercial, made his studies for the ecclesiastical state very difficult if not impossible. Sometimes he entertained doubts about his vocation, and these were strengthened by his constant failure in class, even in the most commonplace subjects. At last he asked for his dimissorials, and left towards the end of June in this year. He very soon got a position as confidential clerk in the employment of the Great Northern Railway Company, where he lead a most exemplary life for nine or ten years, when he died respected by all who knew him.

We forgot to mention in its proper place the ordination to the priesthood of Father Arthur Devine, which took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June in our own church, the ordaining Prelate being the Most Rev. Dr. Whelan, Bishop of Bombay.

It was arranged towards the end of this year to recommence the building of the new church, and for this object Fathers Pius, the late Rector, and Laurence left for America in July to collect funds. It was first thought of asking the assistance of our Yankee cousins toward the reduction of the debt, but it was considered more advisable to ask their help for a new church: the object would be more popular. They were absent from Ireland for three years. We shall have more to say of this undertaking later on.

(Transcriber's note: This is where Volume II ends. There is loosely inserted inside the back cover a number of closely written pages – with much of them crossed out – which possibly were being used to organise source material – but they are much too difficult to decipher in a reasonable amount of time.)