

DIOCESE OF LIMERICK

VOCATIONS



JANUARY 2021

Fortitude

A stable disposition to do the right thing in the face of fear.

St. Joseph, most valiant... pray for us.

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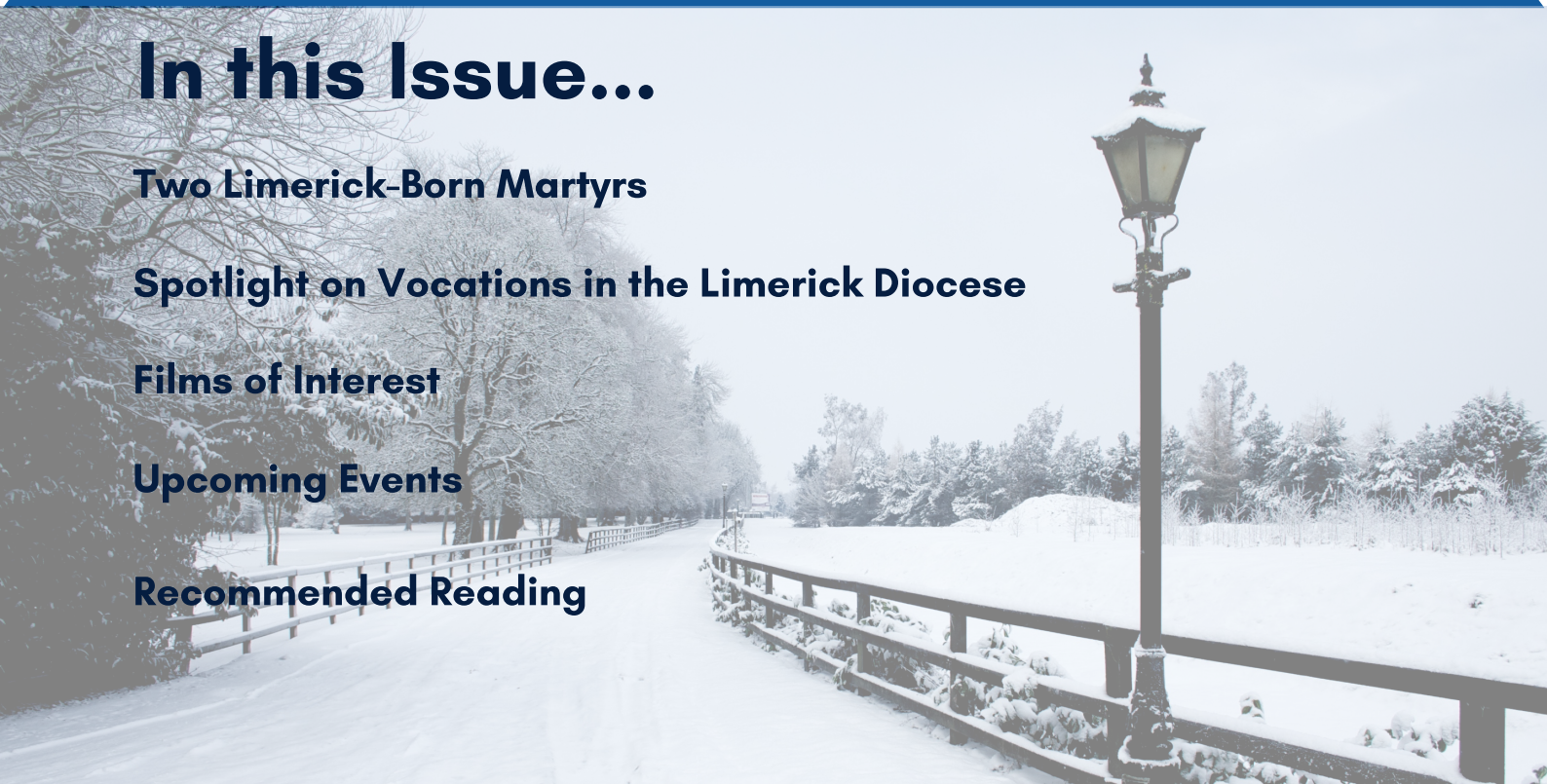
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TWO LIMERICK-BORN MARTYRS

By An Mangaire Sugach

From Odds and Ends article in Limerick Leader 1992

Two of the martyrs to be beatified in Rome this Sunday were born in Co. Limerick. These were Bishop Terence Albert O'Brien and Fr. Maurice Mac Kenraghty - the name Mac Kenraghty, an attempt to render phonetically the purely Irish name Mac Ionnrachtaigh, has, since the martyred priest's time, been anglicised Enright to his contemporaries the priest would have been known as Muiris Mac Ionnrachtaigh.

Maurice's father, a gold-smith, had come from North Kerry to Kilmallock, where Maurice was born. Maurice chose the ecclesiastical state, and having pursued a course of study and obtained a degree in Sacred Theology, most likely on the Continent, was ordained a priest. He was an eloquent preacher, and laboured for some time in Kilmallock and the surrounding countryside. Later, he became chaplain to the Earl of Desmond, and shared the rigours and the danger of the Desmond Wars with the Earl and his men. As Monsignor Patrick Corish remarks in his booklet, *The Irish Martyrs* "... it comes as no surprise to find him as chaplain to the Earl of Desmond, for Kilmallock was one of the great Desmond strongholds."

On September 17, 1583, Fr. Mac Kenraghty, who had become separated from the Earl's party, was captured by English Government forces in Duhallow - the Earl himself was to be slain on November 11 of that year. Fr. Mac Kenraghty was taken to Clonmel, where he was cast into prison and where he was to remain for the next 18 months.

On Easter Eve, 1585, Victor White, one of the leading Catholic citizens of Clonmel, bribed the head jailer to release Fr. Mac Kenraghty for Easter, so that he, White and his wife, and their neighbours, could have the sacraments, confession and Mass. The priest was accordingly released. Unfortunately, it happened that just at this time the English Lord President of Munster, Sir John Norris, arrived in Clonmel; and, as Monsignor Corish says: "The jailer, to save what was left of his skin, betrayed the priest and his host."

Just as Mass was about to begin, Norris's soldiers burst into White's house. Some of those in the house, including Fr. Mac Kenraghty, managed to escape, but White was placed under arrest. The priest hid himself in a heap of straw in the courtyard, and as soon as it was safe to do so, left the town and went into the country.

White was threatened with death and the confiscation of his property unless he delivered the priest up to the authorities. Fr. Mac Kenraghty, hearing of this, sent word to White that, to save him, he would give himself up. White objected strongly and said he was prepared to lose his life - rather than that the priest should be put to death. But Fr. Mac Kenraghty was determined to save his host and surrendered to the authorities.

He was tried before the military tribunal of the Lord President. At the trial he was asked to renounce his Faith and take the Oath of Supremacy, being offered pardon and promotion if he did so. He refused, and was condemned to death as a traitor. He was hanged in Clonmel on April 20, 1585.



St. Terence and St. Maurice of GENNOY O'RIELEY, Archdeacon of Cashel, A.D. 1583. See also CORISH'S 'IRISH MARTYRS', Bishop of Down and Connor and PATRICK'S 'THE DESMOND WARS'.



The second Co. Limerick-born martyr was Bishop Terence Albert O'Brien, who was born in Tuogh, near Cappamore, in 1601. These Cappamore O'Briens were a branch of the powerful Dalcassian family of O'Brien, and Terence's father was the owner of an estate of some 2,000 acres. Growing up in a completely Irish-speaking environment, Terence Albert O'Brien would have been known as Traolach O'Briain – the Albert was his name in religion, perhaps an anglicisation of Ailbhe, name of the patron of the diocese of Emly.

Terence O'Brien joined the Dominican Order in Limerick in 1621, and completed his studies in Toledo in Spain, where he was ordained in 1627. After ordination he returned to Ireland, and served two terms as prior in Limerick, and one in Lorrha, Co. Tipperary. In 1643 he was elected Provincial, which made him Superior over the entire Irish branch of his Order. He went to Rome the following year to represent Ireland at the General Chapter of the Dominicans, and made such an impression on the Roman authorities that he was appointed Bishop of Emly. He was ordained bishop by Cardinal Rinuccini in Waterford on April 2, 1648.

Cardinal Rinuccini was in Ireland as Papal Nuncio to the Confederation of Kilkenny, the national parliament that had been set up in the period of Irish Catholic resurgence that followed the Rising of 1641. The following year Cromwell came to Ireland to begin his campaign of terror against all those opposed to the English Parliamentary forces. Having subjugated most of the country, Cromwell returned to England and left his son-in-law, Ireton, to complete the task.

Ireton laid siege to Limerick on June 4, 1651. Bishop Terence Albert O'Brien, who had spent more than three years in untiring efforts on behalf of his diocese and of the whole Irish church, was in the city when the siege began. Attempts to negotiate a surrender broke down when Ireton made it clear that there would be no toleration of Catholicism, and that no terms whatsoever would be offered to the Catholic clergy. Bishop O'Brien and the military commander, Aodh Dubh O'Neill, were those most strongly opposed to surrendering on those terms.

By late autumn, however, the city, hungry, exhausted and ravaged by bubonic plague, had to surrender. On October 27, 1651, Ireton's troops entered the city. Ireton had decreed that no pardon would be extended to Catholic priests, and to a number of prominent personalities, including Aodh Dubh O'Neill, who had advised against surrender. Some of those exempted from pardon escaped in disguise, including the bishop of Limerick. Diplomatic representations made on behalf of Aodh Dubh O'Neill, who had had a distinguished career in the Spanish Army, resulted in his being released and allowed to go to Spain.

Making no attempt to escape as others had done, Terence Albert O'Brien was arrested in the plague-house, tending the sick. He was immediately tried by courtmartial, sentenced to be hanged and executed next day. Many others were hanged also, including Major General Purcell; the mayor, Thomas Stritch; Dominic Fanning, a former mayor; and Luke Wadding's nephew, Geoffrey Barron.

We were told that Terence Albert O'Brien was put to death with special barbarity, his dead body being spun round and beaten until it was a bloody pulp.

From the day of his death he was venerated as a martyr.

Accessed on 21/01/21 - <http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/saints024.pdf>

DIOCESAN VOCATIONS SPOTLIGHT

Tim Collins



Limerick Diocese Seminarian

Theology Student:
Maynooth

HOW DID YOU DISCERN THAT YOU HAD A VOCATION TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD?

I first thought about the priesthood as a child. The Church was a strong influence in my early years. I was both an alter server and reader in the parish of Croagh/Kilfinny. However, as I got older the thought of priesthood quickly left me and only returned some years ago. Having strayed a little from the Church during my undergraduate years at University, I began searching for meaning and purpose in my own life. These questions, amongst others things, helped me to return to my faith and practice it with more fervour. During this period of spiritual re-awakening, I started to pray about what God wanted me to do with my life. Eventually, the idea of priesthood returned and at first this both shocked and frightened me a little. I tried to ignore it but the harder I tried the more prominent it became. One day, I went to my parish priest and he was able to answer many of the questions I had. The one thing I remember from this encounter with Fr Boyce was his encouragement and this helped me to discern my vocation more seriously. The rest is history.

WHAT STAGE ARE YOU AT IN YOUR FORMATION AND WHAT HAS IMPACTED YOU THE MOST DURING THIS TIME OF FORMATION?

I'm in my first of year of theology at St Patrick's college, Maynooth. I completed my philosophy studies in Rome and spent a year with the Focolare movement in Loppiano, Italy. Looking back at my years of formation so far, I can appreciate how God works through others to help us come closer to Him. Also, during my time in formation, I have realised the importance of relying more on God rather than on myself.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES THAT YOU SEE WITH THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD?

I'm not sure if I'm qualified enough to answer these questions. The joys of priesthood are numerous. One that stands out for me are the opportunities to help serve the community, whether that be visiting the sick, administering the sacraments, or simply being there for people in their time of need. A challenge for the priesthood today is getting Christ's message across to more and more people. Certainly, the Covid-19 crisis is an added challenge due to the restrictions.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CANDIDATE TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD?

Let me think... (What are my characteristics. Joke!). Seriously, I can only speak from my own experience, but I believe an openness to personal growth and self-awareness are key characteristics for the priesthood. Another one is to be joyful. Pope Francis, in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, speaks about how joy is a sign of the Christian life.

WHO WERE/ARE INFLUENTIAL ROLE MODELS FOR YOU IN YOUR FAITH LIFE?

Certainly, my parents were very influential. Since childhood, we were always taught that the most important thing in life is faith. I have fond childhood memories of visiting various Marian Shrines such as Lourdes, Knock, and Walsingham. I believe such experiences at an early stage have influenced me greatly in my own faith journey.

WHO ARE YOUR FAVOURITE SAINTS AND WHY?

Two of my favourite saints are St Augustine and St Francis of Assisi. St Augustine's *Confessions* is one of my favourite books to read, and Assisi, one of my favourite places to visit. Both saints have similar conversion stories in that before encountering Christ, they were looking for meaning and purpose in all the wrong places. Their stories remind us that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future. Also, through the lives of these saints we see how wonderful and powerful God's mercy is.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

In my spare time, I love to cycle. I'm fortunate that close to the seminary in Maynooth there is a cycle/walk path alongside the canal that travels for miles (I prefer the safety of this cycle path rather than the craziness of Rome). Other interests include sports such as hurling and soccer (mostly watching). Being a hurling fan in Limerick at the moment is very exciting. I also enjoy reading. The last book I read was *A Severe Mercy* by Sheldon Vanauken.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUNG MEN WHO FEEL THAT THEY MIGHT BE CALLED TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD?

Be brave! I believe God is continuing to call many men to the priesthood but that it can be rather difficult to hear his voice amongst all the distractions of our present age. Set aside time each day for reflective prayer. This allows us to sit still and really be attentive to what God is saying to us. Thirdly, if you feel you might be called to the priesthood, be sure to speak to a priest about it. They have gone through the discernment process and should be able to answer any questions you have.

FILMS OF INTEREST

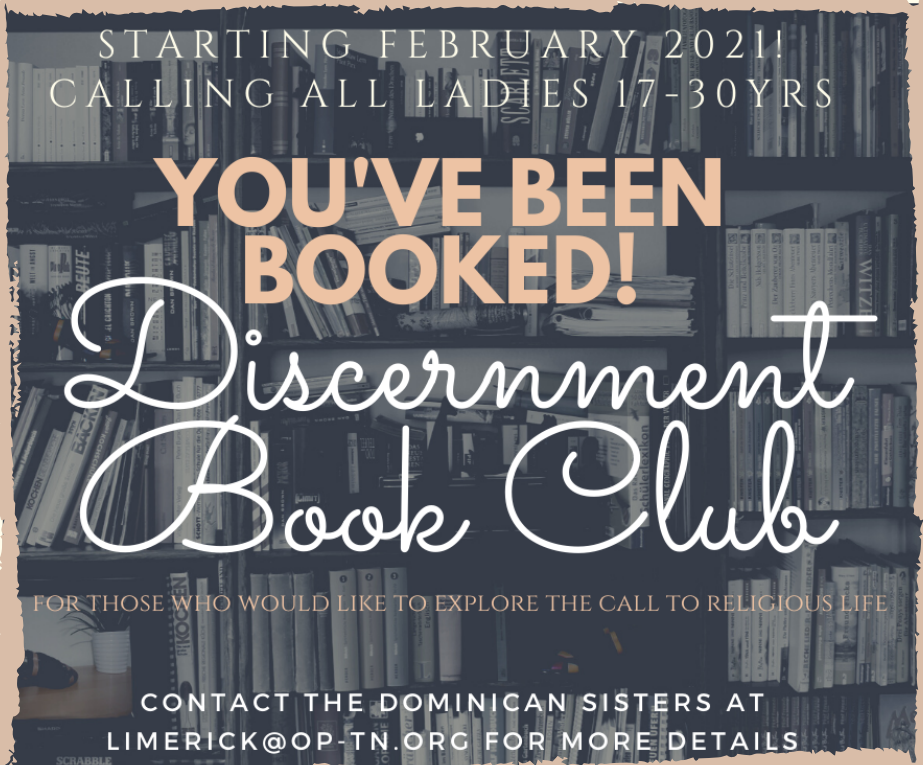


<https://vimeo.com/483731943>

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2020-12/new-film-priest-explores-value-of-faith.html>

Audio embedded in article

Upcoming Events



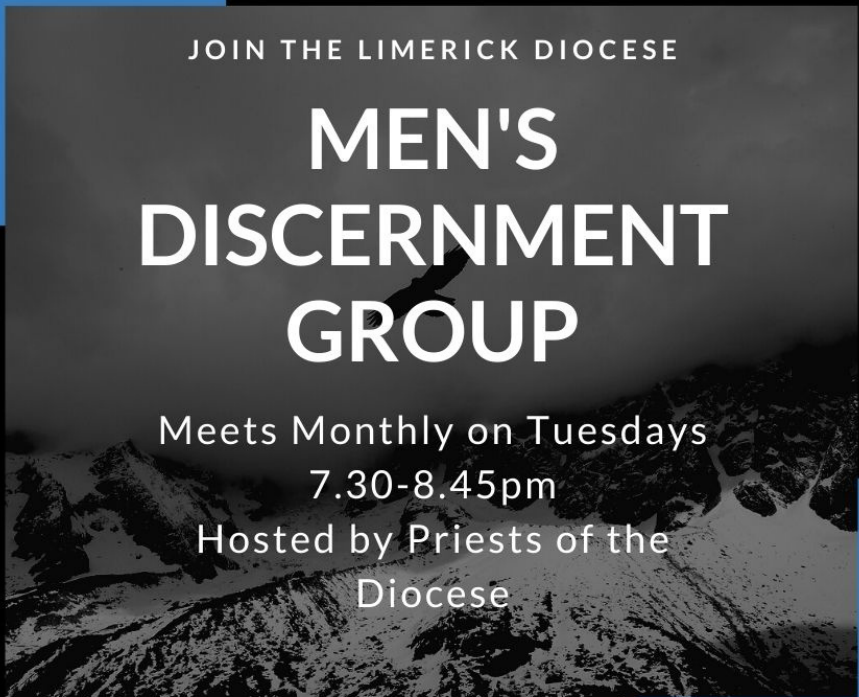
STARTING FEBRUARY 2021!
CALLING ALL LADIES 17-30YRS

YOU'VE BEEN BOOKED!

Discernment Book Club

FOR THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE THE CALL TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

CONTACT THE DOMINICAN SISTERS AT
LIMERICK@OP-TN.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS



JOIN THE LIMERICK DIOCESE

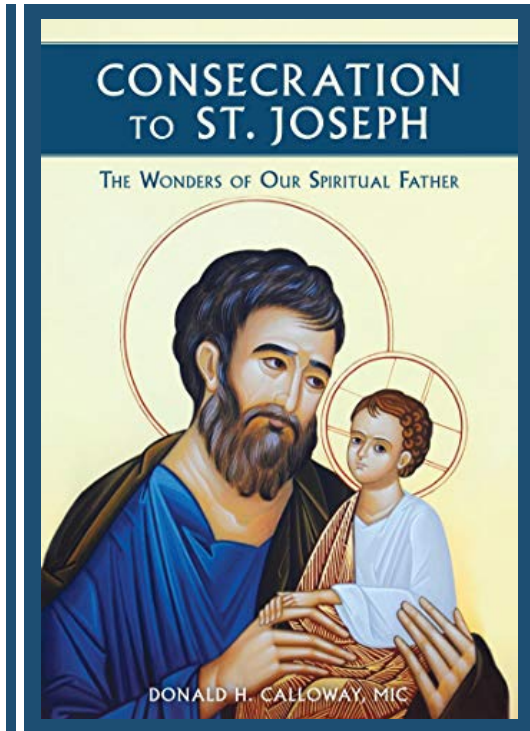
**MEN'S
DISCERNMENT
GROUP**

Meets Monthly on Tuesdays
7.30-8.45pm
Hosted by Priests of the
Diocese

Please contact vocations@limerickdiocese.org for the zoom link

RECOMMENDED READING

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH



As we commence this year of St. Joseph, we recommend the spiritual guide by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, as a help to learning more about the "Silent Saint".

From the description:

Drawing on the wealth of the Church's living tradition, Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, calls on all of us to turn to St. Joseph, entrust ourselves, our Church, and our world to our spiritual father's loving care, and then watch for wonders when the Universal Patron of the Church opens the floodgates of Heaven to pour out graces into our lives today. Definitely a book for our time, Consecration to St. Joseph is dedicated to meeting the challenges of the present moment and restoring order to our Church and our world, all through the potent paternal intercession and care of St. Joseph. This book has everything you need to take your love and devotion to St. Joseph to a whole different level: a thorough program of consecration to St. Joseph; information on the 10 wonders of St. Joseph; and prayers and devotions to St. Joseph. Accessible, motivating, this book will kick off a great movement of consecration to our spiritual father and change the world.

<https://www.shopmercy.org/consecration-to-st-joseph-the-wonders-of-our-spiritual-father.html?source=cts>

SUPPORTING VOCATIONS IN YOUR PARISH?

Please pray for holy vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life regularly. Would you consider having regular Adoration for this intention? Do you currently have any events or initiatives in your parish or schools to support the understanding and promotion of vocations? Would you like to? If we can help to organize something for you, please be in touch!

DIOCESE OF LIMERICK
VOCATION OFFICE

www.limerickdiocese.org
www.facebook.com/dioceseflimerick
vocations@limerickdiocese.org