

Mount Argus and Ireland  
1856-2006



*150 years*

Passionist Presence

# Greetings and Blessings to our Many Friends



## Greetings from Fr. Martin Coffey C.P., Provincial

We look back over the last 150 years with some pride when we recall the names of holy men and the good work they did for the people of Ireland. This little brochure presents some of the highlights of a history that began so modestly when Paul Mary Pakenham came here in 1856. Since then Passionists have travelled all over the country telling the people about Jesus' Passion and death, 'the greatest story ever told'. Thanks to your support and encouragement we are still sharing the Gospel and helping people to find hope and strength in God. The next 150 years will see many changes in Ireland and in the Church and we look forward with hope. Our commitment to the people of Ireland is as strong as ever. We will continue to preach Christ crucified and to remind the people of God's boundless love.

Thank you for your support and please pray for us.

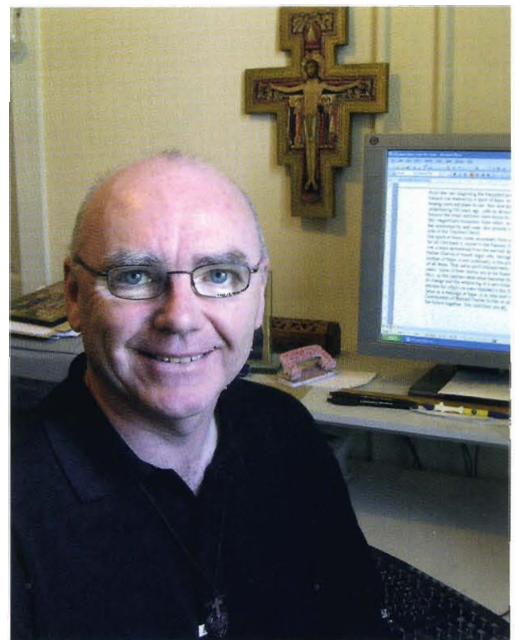
## Greetings from Fr. Frank Keevins C.P., Rector Mount Argus

From the outset the Passionist presence in Mount Argus was marked by a spirit of hope, even when reasons for hoping were not evident. How else do we account for the undertaking 150 years ago, with no obvious resources, to begin the construction of this magnificent Monastery and Church we see today? From Mount Argus the Message of the Cross has emanated far and wide, like streams of living water flowing from the side of the Crucified Christ.

Our spirit of hope comes from our core charism, rooted in the Passion of Jesus. It was a hope epitomised from the earliest days in Father Charles who, through his devotion to Mary, the Mother of Hope, lived continually in the presence of the God of all Hope. That same spirit imbued others throughout the years. Some of their stories are within these pages.

As this jubilee becomes the impetus for the embracing of a new future, we believe that our mission to proclaim the Passion of Jesus as a message of hope is as valid and vital as ever. The pending Canonisation of Father Charles invites us to renew our hope and to face this future together.

May God bless you all.



Fr. Aidan Troy  
Superior  
*Holy Cross, Ardoyne*



Fr. Paul Francis Spencer  
Superior  
*St. Mungo's, Glasgow*



Fr. Brian D'Arcy  
Superior  
*St. Gabriel's, The Grange*



Fr. Dermot Gallagher  
Superior  
*Tibur Mine, Crossgar*



Fr. Arthur McCann  
Regional Superior  
*Botswana and South Africa*

# St. Paul of the Cross - Founder of the Passionists

## St. Paul of the Cross

1694 - 1775

By the age of twenty-four Paul of the Cross was convinced that God was calling him to found a new religious order. To this vision was added another - a strong desire to pray and work for the conversion of England and the neighbouring countries. The first he was to achieve in his own life time whilst the second was left to his followers.

St. Paul of the Cross was born on 3rd January 1694 in Ovada, Italy. Nurtured by a Christian family and active in his local Church his prayer life developed rapidly in his teens. At 26 he left home to become a hermit and two years later was experiencing the heights of the prayer of mystical union.

He believed that the troubles of the world were a result of the forgetting of the Passion of Jesus. He wanted all to keep alive the Memory of the Sufferings of the Crucified One. This, he believed, began in prayer at the foot of the cross.

Ordained a priest at 33 years of age he lived his beliefs. For the next 45 years he preached missions bringing the message of the Cross and the Love of the Crucified Jesus to people. Miracles and conversions abounded. Many learned to pray and to live a true Christian life.

All his life he struggled to found a Religious Community that would live his ideals and carry on his work. When he was 47 his first followers - the Passionists - appeared on the streets of Italy. Over the next thirty years he founded 12 houses with 176 religious priests and brothers. He died at the age of 81.



## Coming to England

In the mid 1800's Passionists began to move out of Italy and into north-west Europe. Blessed Dominic Barberi, who joined the Passionists in 1815, founded a house at Ere, in Belgium, in 1840. From there in 1841 he, with the Irishman Fr. Amedeus McBride C.P., crossed the channel to England and opened a Passionist Monastery at Aston Hall, near Stone, Staffordshire, on 18th February 1842.

It was the time of the Great Famine in Ireland and many Irish had fled the country and some settled around Stone. Here the Passionists encountered them among their scattered flock. Seeing in their sufferings the image of Christ Crucified the Passionists moved among them preaching, comforting them and ministering to their sick. Blessed Dominic wrote that, if necessary, the chalices should be melted down and sold to generate funds for relief of the starving in Ireland. The Passionists grew to love the Irish they met and were soon crossing the Irish Sea to be with them in their own land.



Blessed Dominic Barberi C.P.

# Fr. Vincent Grotti C.P. and Fr. Ignatius Spencer C.P.

## First Mission St. Audoen's, Dublin 1849

In 1849 the Passionists were invited to give a Mission in St. Audoen's by the Parish priest Fr. Kelly. From Aston Hall in England came Blessed Dominic, Fr. Ignatius Spencer, and Fr. Vincent Grotti to conduct this first Passionist Mission in Ireland. The three week event started on 29th April.

The Mission opened with the solemn entry into the church with a missionary carrying the large Mission Cross. Each morning at 7.30 Blessed Dominic gave an instruction on the Ten Commandments and a meditation on the Passion after which the three missionaries said Mass. Each evening at 7.00 p.m. Father Vincent spoke on the Sacrament of Penance and this was followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; a Sermon by Father Ignatius on the Eternal Truths; and a Meditation on the Sacred Passion. Following the Passionist custom in Italy the missionaries rang the great church bell at 10 o'clock every night when everyone was asked to kneel down for a short time to pray for unrepentant sinners.



Mission Cross used by St. Paul of the Cross

This exercise continued each evening until the day when a meditation was given on Christ's prayer for His executioners. The bell was again rung but this time all the people in the church were asked to beg pardon of anyone they had offended. The missionaries set the example with Father Ignatius, already garbed in his Passionist habit, kneeling down with a crown of thorns on his head and a rope round his neck to beg pardon of the people. Blessed Dominic and Father Vincent then did the same.

Throughout the Mission, as Father Ignatius recorded, the 'work of Confessions was quite beyond the powers and time of the missionaries'. Every day all the confessionals were beset by crowds of penitents, who awaited their turns, many of them from five in the morning till eleven at night and this for days in succession, never going out for refreshment. Father Ignatius wrote, 'that those who had not some real difficulty would hardly have endured so long waiting.' The majority, however, were years away from the Sacraments.

On the last Sunday, Father Ignatius preached at the Renewal of Baptismal Vows and 3,000 people received Holy Communion. The Mission had attracted Protestants and as many as fifteen were received into the Church, something hitherto unknown in Dublin.



High Altar, St. Audoen's Church, High Street, Dublin

*'Let no day pass without making mental prayer for half-hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, on the sorrowful Passion of our Redeemer.'*

*(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 12)*

## Fr. Vincent Grotti C.P.

In 1844, the then Canon Grotti of Viterbo Cathedral, Italy joined the Passionists and became Fr. Vincent and was sent to England in 1846. Here he came in contact with the Irish and after the St. Audoen's Mission began to travel to Ireland on preaching assignments.

In 1852 a Mission was planned for Birr with a view to a healing of the people caught up in a schism. The Passionists, not yet arrived in Ireland, were invited to give the mission. Fr. Vincent Grotti C.P., Fr. Martin Payne C.P. and Fr. Ambrose Courtney C.P. formed the Mission team. The Mission ran from 22nd August to the 12th September and was considered a great success with 20,000 communicants during the Mission.

Fr. Vincent Grotti was very anxious to found the Congregation in Ireland but up to this had had no success. On leaving Italy he had brought with him a Mission Cross used by St. Paul of the Cross which was the Cross that he brought to Birr. At the end of the Mission he gave the Mission Cross to the Birr Convent of Mercy. Possibly he left it as a visible reminder of the great work of reconciliation accomplished during the Mission. When the Birr Convent closed in 1996 the Mission Cross was given to Mount Argus.

The cross dates from the mid 1700's and its association with St. Paul of the Cross makes it very precious to the community in Mount Argus.

Fr. Vincent returned to Rome in 1863 and there preached regularly in the Irish College. He died there in 1883.



Fr. Vincent Grotti C.P.



Fr. Ignatius Spencer C.P. (1799 - 1864)  
*Copy of last photograph taken in Ireland 1864.*

## Fr. Ignatius Spencer C.P.

Born George Spencer in 1799, he was the son of the second Earl Spencer and became an Anglican Clergyman. He converted to Catholicism in 1830 and went to Rome to study for the priesthood where he met Blessed Dominic Barberi. He was ordained in 1832 and returned to England to work in the Midlands. His health broke down and after recuperation in 1841 started a prayer campaign for the conversion of England.

In 1842 Fr. Ignatius came to Ireland preaching and promoting his prayer campaign. He visited about 15 cities and large towns. In 1846, back in England, he entered the Passionist Novitiate and was professed in 1847. He returned to Ireland to continue his campaign in 1848 and thus he became the first Passionist to set foot in Ireland.

After the Mission in St. Audoen's in 1849 he was back in Ireland in 1850. In succeeding years he promoted the prayer campaign but in the context of Preached Parish Missions.

In 1855 he was on a Mission in Borrisakane with Frs. Vincent Grotti, Bernard O'Loughlin and Honorius Mazzini. The local paper described Honorius as having sincerity of manner and soothing exhortations, praised Bernard for his beautiful catechetical instructions, Vincent as being the most feeling and impressive, and Ignatius for giving a powerful and noble appeal for his campaign.

In 1864 whilst on a campaign in Scotland Ignatius, having offered the Sacrifice of the Mass, was on his way to visit a friend (Mr. Robert Monteith) when he died suddenly at his friend's door. He was in the 65th year of his age.

# The First Mass in Mount Argus - 15<sup>th</sup> August 1856

Father Vincent Grotti had arrived in England in 1846, where he quickly became very fond of the Irish people, because they reminded him of the people he knew at home in Viterbo. Once he had given the Mission with Blessed Dominic and Father Ignatius Spencer in St Audoen's, Dublin in 1849 his heart was in Ireland.

On 27 September 1852, as the Father Provincial of the Anglo-Hibernian Province, he had asked Archbishop Cullen if it would be possible for the Passionists to make a foundation in Ireland. Archbishop Cullen replied that he not only favoured the idea of a foundation but was most anxious for it, so that the Passionists could 'work for the poor Irish in their own country, as the same Passionists had done in England for them.' He promised to make every effort to find a suitable place for them in his own Archdiocese of Dublin. More than two years had passed and there had been no word from him.

During the early part of 1855 and between missions in Dungannon, Borrisokane and then Lorrha, Fr. Vincent visited the Archbishop who had been unsuccessful in regard to finding a house for the Passionists. The Archbishop encouraged them to look for a property themselves.



Paul Cardinal Cullen

On the next visit Fr. Vincent and Fr. Ignatius found the Archbishop away and they went to Rathmines to find the Vicar General of the Archdiocese. They met Father Matthew Collier, one of the curates in Rathmines, who casually asked them why the Passionists did not have a house in Ireland. Father Vincent told him that they would love to have one, if only they could find a site. Father Collier told them that he knew a good site, Mount Argus, near Harold's Cross, and he took them to see it. It belonged to a widow, Mrs Eliza Byrne. She was away from home but Father Vincent was pleased with what he saw, 'a tall red-brick building, towering above a few orchard trees'. He and Father Ignatius returned to England that evening.



Fr. Mathew Collier

Father Collier now took up the task and spoke to Mrs. Byrne who was agreeable to sell. Fr. Meagher the Parish priest approved. The New Year passed and Fr. Vincent was back in Ireland in April 1856. The sale was agreed for the sum of £2,200. By 4th May the house and lands belonged to the Passionists and the new foundation was officially sanctioned by the Passionist Generalate in Rome and by Archbishop Cullen and his Chapter. It was decided that the Passionists would occupy their new Retreat from 15 August, the feast of Our Lady's Assumption.

For Fr. Vincent the next issue was the appointing of a Rector for the new house and community. He decided on Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham C.P. who at the time was in Rome in charge of students. Fr. Paul Mary arrived back in London on July 1st 1856.

Fr. Paul Mary had been born in Dublin as the Honourable Charles Pakenham. After an early military career he astonished his noble circle of friends by becoming a Catholic in 1850, and further still, when he applied for admission to the Passionist Congregation and was accepted in 1851, and ordained a priest in 1855.

As a religious he distinguished himself by his strict fidelity to the Rule and by his reputation for sanctity. Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham took possession of the house at Mount Argus and celebrated the first Mass there on the Feast of the Assumption, 15th August 1856. He had been staying for a while with Mr. Terence Dolan, 31 Mount Pleasant Square in Rathmines.

The Mass was celebrated in the front parlour of the house with a congregation of five persons. These were Bro. Seraphin Pesce C.P., Fr. Matthew Collier the Rathmines curate, and three lay people. The first lay person was Mrs. Byrne who had sold the property to the Passionists. The other two were Mr. and Mrs. William Tully of 73 Harold's Cross. They were friends of Fr. Paul Mary. Mrs. Tully and Mrs. Byrne were cousins. Later that day Fr. Vincent Grotti joined them after a Mission in Drogheda. They were also visited by Most Rev. Dr. Kilduff, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise who welcomed them to Ireland.



Bro. Seraphin Pesce C.P.

The house at Mount Argus is described by Fr. Pius Devine C.P. as being tall (three stories), of red brick, 'like a slice cut from a factory' which towered over a few orchard trees. It became the Retreat of Blessed Paul of the Cross.

Quickly people flocked to the new foundation so that the 'parlour-chapel' was inadequate. On September 17th Fr. Vincent laid the foundation stone for a new chapel which was to extend from the side of the house. The parlour of the house was 'scooped out' for the sanctuary.

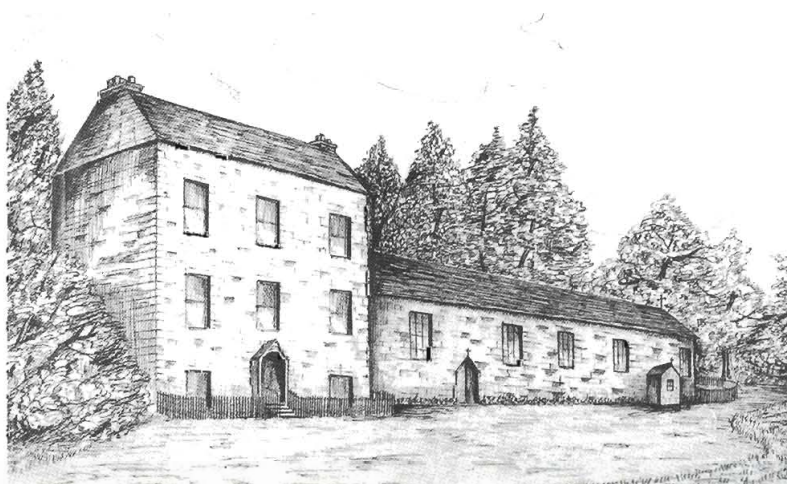
Work on the new chapel proceeded so rapidly that within three months the building was completed. It could cater for a congregation of 600 people.

On the 19th December 1856 the Solemn Dedication of the Church of St. Patrick and Blessed Paul of the Cross was celebrated. Cardinal Cullen was ill and his place was taken by Dr. Whelan, Bishop of Bombay assisted by Dr. O'Connor, Bishop of Salda. Many clergy attended and the sermon was preached by Dr. White, Provincial of the Dominicans.



Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham C.P. First Rector of Mount Argus

*'May the most holy cross of Jesus, our Good,  
be always planted in the midst of our hearts so  
that our spirit may be grafted into this Tree of Life.'*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 24)



First House with Pakenham Church to right.

# Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham C.P.

## Early Family Life

Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham was born in Dublin on September 21st 1821 and given the name Charles. Born a Protestant into a family of the Irish Protestant Aristocracy he was surrounded by privilege and luxury. He was the fourth son of Thomas, second Earl of Longford and Baron of Silchester. His mother was Georgina Emma Charlotte Lygon, daughter of William, first Earl of Beauchamp. He spent his childhood years between the Dublin residence of his parents and their country seat, Pakenham Hall, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath.

## School and Military Life

While still very young, Charles was sent to a preparatory school at Richmond and was later entered at the English public school at Winchester. There was never a doubt concerning his future as his own inclinations and the example of his forebears clearly indicated a military career. He entered the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, in 1835 when he was not quite fourteen years of age. In 1846 he is listed as Captain in the First Battalion of Grenadier Guards and had he remained in the army he would have risen high in the ranks.

## Becoming a Catholic

At this time he began to have serious qualms about his position as a member of the Anglican Church. John Henry Newman had already become a Catholic and other noted intellectuals were on the threshold of Catholicism. He agonised over the decision. He prayed unceasingly for divine light; he fasted often; he studied text-books of theology both Catholic and Protestant; and still he could not decide. It was during the summer of 1850 that he made the decision and on 15th August he was received into the Catholic Church.



Birthplace of Fr. Paul Mary  
Now No. 10 Parnell Square East.



Portrait of Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham painted in Broadway while he was Vice-Master of novices by a Mr. Grant (by profession a house painter). Paul was ordered to sit by Fr. Vincent Grotti.

## Entering the Passionists

One of his sisters was horrified by his defection from Anglicanism. "For goodness sake, Charles," she snapped, "get married as soon as you can or you'll end up by becoming a monk". Her words were prophetic for that is what he decided. He announced he was going to become a Passionist. Family and friends were astounded. The "Iron Duke" of Wellington could scarcely believe the news about his nephew-in-law. Bad enough to become a Catholic but now a 'monk'! The old Duke respected Charles and his final words were "Well Charles you have been a good soldier, now strive to be a good monk." Another uncle, the famous General Lygon, did not take the startling news so philosophically. "Good God," he ranted, "you'll break my heart. Why do you persist in this madness?" And madness it appeared to not a few of Pakenham's friends.

On a Saturday afternoon in May he left his family and friends behind and arrived on horseback at St. Saviour's Retreat, Broadway, Worcester, to become a Passionist novice and to receive the new name of Brother Paul Mary. In the eyes of those he loved this was a mortal blow struck at the family honour. To think that their Charles should go about "barefooted like a dirty mad mendicant" was almost too much to bear, "I wish he were dead," wailed his sister in desperation. But in the



seclusion of his Passionist Retreat, Brother Paul Mary was heard to whisper: "How little have I given up for so much." In spite of indifferent health, he never flinched in the exact observance of all the rules of the Passionist way of life, and the fervour of his extraordinary piety never cooled.

## Ordained a Priest

Brother Paul Mary continued his studies and was ordained a priest by Most Rev. Dr. Ullathorne at Oscott College, Birmingham, on September 29th 1855. After his ordination he was transferred to Rome where he was in charge of students, but soon his superiors recalled him to establish the Passionist Retreat at Mount Argus and to become its first Rector in 1856.

## Rector of Mount Argus

The first mass in Mount Argus on 15th August 1856 had been celebrated by Fr. Paul Mary and the first extension, a Church for 600 people, completed by December of the same year. Life continued in the new foundation, masses were said, confessions heard and sermons preached. Fr. Paul Mary as superior was well-respected by the other religious. He led by example and the religious willingly followed his lead. The day and night round of prayers were strictly adhered to. All traces of luxury vanished. Food was plain and simple with soup and desserts being dispensed with. Coffee was taken in the morning without sugar and water was drunk for the rest of the day. The people of Dublin flocked to this new priest in their midst. They came for confession where they found a very sympathetic ear. They came to listen to his sermons and to his catechism classes. Religious and people recognised someone special in their midst.



Grave of Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham C.P.



Sign worn by  
Father Paul Mary Pakenham,  
Ivory inlaid in Oak

## Illness and Last Days

In November 1856 Fr. Paul Mary was appointed with others to preach the Mission in the Catholic church in Rathmines. Halfway through the Mission Fr. Paul Mary fell ill. In the language of the day it was described as 'a seizure of the heart'. He returned to Mount Argus but his health was broken. The religious described him as 'dying on his feet'. Through letters his family were aware of his situation and one of his sisters came to visit him. Into the New Year of 1857 the best of medical attention was summoned to no avail. Towards the end of February 1857 Fr. Paul Mary was confined to bed and was often unconscious. The end was near and he received the Last Sacraments and passed to his reward on 1st March. He was 35 years of age. On that day he was to have preached a Charity Sermon in the Jesuit Church, Gardiner St., Dublin, in aid of the Poor Clare Convent, Harold's Cross. Fr. Ignatius Spencer C.P. took his place and announced "The voice of him who was to have addressed you today shall never again be heard upon this earth." One who was present on the occasion recorded that "a suppressed wail of grief" was heard throughout the crowded church. Fr. Paul Mary's notes for the charity sermon are in the Museum in Mount Argus.

Although he had lived at Mount Argus for only six months, a newspaper correspondent of the day could report with perfect truth that "Dublin mourned over Father Paul Mary with a universal cry of sorrow." His funeral was attended by thousands of Dubliners, but only two military officers who had once been his comrades in arms turned up. Archbishop Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, presided at the Funeral Mass attended by priests, religious and people of the Diocese. Fr. Paul Mary's remains were laid to rest in a corner of the Chapel to Blessed Paul of the Cross that he had built. Later, an altar was placed over the grave.

# Recalling Faces of the Early Passionists



Photograph taken at Mount Argus 21st July 1864 which is the first time the Superior General visited. With him are the priests, brothers and students of the community. The important people are in the back row, starting from the left are Blessed Charles, Frs. Osmund Maguire (Rector), Ignatius Spencer, Peter Paul Cayro (General), Alphonsus O'Neill, Basil Moubert, Columban O'Grady, Celestine Trant, Pancras Driffield and Alban Cowley.

## Fr. Columban O'Grady 1821 - 1889



Columban was born in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary in 1820. In his young days he was a journalist, a 'Repealer' and later a 'Young Irelander'. His articles in the 'Munster Citizen' resulted in him being locked up in Clonmel Jail on the charge of treason. He was released without trial and wandered friendless and penniless. In 1857 he met Fr. Ignatius Spencer and in 1859 joined the Passionists. Ordained in 1861 he lived and worked as a Passionist Priest for 28 years dying in Mount Argus after a stroke in 1889.

## Fr. Hubert De Neve 1836 - 1866



Father Hubert, known in the Annals as 'The Martyr of Charity' was born at Hayst, in Belgium, on 20 August, 1836. He made his novitiate in Broadway in 1860 and ordained in 1865 - the year after this photograph. Sent to Glasgow full of charity especially to the poor sick he volunteered to attend the Fever Hospital where he caught the fever. Doctors claimed it was strong enough to kill ten men! He died after a few days aged 30 years.

## Bro. John Mary Walsh 1835 - 1909



Bro. John Mary - in the world John Walsh - was born at Innishowen, Co. Cork, Ireland, on 23 April 1835. He was professed a lay brother on 9th October 1857 and was a religious of great simplicity and unaffected faith and piety. He laboured long and well for the up-building of the Province. He worked on the New Monastery at Mount Argus, the New House in Ardoyne and the decoration of the Church in Highgate, London. He died in Ardoyne in 1909 aged 74 years.

## Fr. Ambrose Mooney 1839 - 1868



Born James in Dublin in 1839, joined the Passionists in 1859 and was ordained in 1865. He was assigned to the Passionist House in Paris. He was remarkable for his love of study, and for an almost unlimited capacity for learning. Besides Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, he knew German, Italian, Spanish, and French. He said his last mass on Christmas Day 1866 and endured, with great calm and patience fourteen months of a virulent consumption. He died in great tranquillity on 16th January 1868 in Paris aged 29 years.



**Fr. Osmund Maguire C.P.**

Known as the builder of Mount Argus Monastery he was born in Blacklion, near Enniskillen in 1831. At 20 years of age he entered the Novitiate of the Passionists in Broadway, England. His fellow classmates included Paul Mary Pakenham and Sebastian Keens.

Ordained a priest in 1855 he was assigned to Mount Argus where he was Vice-Rector to Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham. On Fr. Paul Mary's death he became Rector of Mount Argus until 1866. He completed the construction of the new monastery in 1863.

Moving to Glasgow he built St. Mungo's Church and worked for some time in Scotland and England. In 1875 he came to Ireland on a Mission, began to suffer ill health and died in Mount Argus in 1877. He was only 46 years of age.



**Fr. Alphonsus O'Neill C.P.**

He was leader of the Passionists who set out in 1887 to found the Congregation in Australia. Born in Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone in 1830, he joined the Passionists in 1852, studied in Rome where he was ordained in 1856.

Returning to England he undertook preaching Missions and was renowned for his Preached Meditations on the Passion. He held many offices in the Province including Provincial. While Rector of Mount Argus in 1866 he was responsible for the laying of the first foundation stone for a new Church. Financial difficulties postponed the project.

In 1877 he began ten years work in Australia. Returning to Ireland he continued to preach. He died in 1899 after a short illness at 69 years of age.



**Fr. Ignatius Paoli C.P.**

Born in Florence in 1818 he was professed a Passionist in 1846. After studies in Rome he was ordained in 1849. In 1857 he became the first Provincial of the Anglo-Hibernian Province.

In 1867 Mount Argus was instituted as an Ecclesiastical College with Fr. Ignatius as President, Spiritual Director and Professor of History and Sacred Eloquence. By late 1868 he was in Ardoyne and built the first Church.

Returning to Rome in 1870 he attended the First Vatican Council. Appointed to the mission fields of Bulgaria he became Archbishop of Bucharest. There he died in 1899 aged 66 years.



**Fr. Dominic O'Neill C.P.**

Fr. Dominic was a younger brother of Fr. Alphonsus. Born in Stewartstown in 1834, he was a 'late vocation' becoming a Passionist in 1864 and ordained in 1868.

Very quickly his talents were recognised and he was appointed Rector of Mount Argus in 1872. Continuing where his brother had left off he set about building an imposing new Church. McCarthy designed a twin towered church for him. As he started Fr. Pius Devine set out on his journey round the world questing for the new Church. By 1878 the Church was completed and opened, but unfortunately in debt.

Dominic, whose preaching was much in demand, gave many parish missions and retreats to religious orders.

Dominic served as superior in Ardoyne, Glasgow and Paris but most of his life was in Mount Argus. Here he was struck down by a 'cold' that sapped his energy. Conscious to the end he still faithfully read his breviary until two days before his death. He passed to his reward on January 30th, 1917, aged 82 years.

# The Building of Mount Argus

## Phase 1 - New Monastery

More Fathers and Brothers were assigned to the new Mount Argus Retreat and plans were drawn up for the building of a larger house for the religious. It would be sited behind the present house but running to the left. The foundation stone for the new monastery was laid by Dr. Whelan, Bishop of Bombay on 13th June 1859. At this time Fr. Charles Houben C.P. had arrived in the house. The building was a massive undertaking for its day as the picture indicates. The architect Mr. J.J. McCarthy drew up the plans and the builder was Mr. Meade and the estimated cost £12,000. The bottom floor housed the kitchen, dining room and public rooms whilst the two upper floors contained the rooms for the Passionists with bathrooms and sick room. The Choir or private chapel of the religious was on the top floor. Eventually, it was hoped to build a suitable large Church.

Misunderstanding arose with the builder who withdrew and the monks themselves took on the task of completing the building. Brother Alphonsus Zeegers C.P. became Clerk of Works and Brother John Walsh C.P. became Master of Works. Employing local labour and craftsmen the building took four years and was opened on 8th September 1863. The finished product was proclaimed by a newspaper of the day as "the noblest religious house erected in these countries since the so-called 'reformation.'" The old house was demolished.



1860 The New Monastery

*'They who suffer for love of Christ help to carry the cross of Jesus Christ and, therefore, will be partakers in his glory in heaven, if they persevere.'*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 79)

## Phase 2 - New Church

The first Church of Blessed Paul of the Cross was now dwarfed by the new monastery and to accommodate the increasing numbers people coming a new Church was needed.

The foundation stone was laid 29th June 1866 under the Rectorship of Fr. Alphonsus O'Neill C.P. but grave financial difficulties put a halt to the building. The brother of Alphonsus, Fr. Dominic O'Neill who became Rector in 1873 re-started the project. Building began to a design with two spires and five years later the Church of St. Paul of the Cross was dedicated on 28th April 1878. The Church facade was in line with the front of the monastery and the body of the Church extended to the rear.



Mount Argus c. 1885  
Old Church Blessed Charles used on right.

## Old Church and Fr. Charles

The old Church was still used by Blessed Charles. A third of it was in front of the new Church and was demolished. The remaining two-thirds was used by Blessed Charles and can be seen in the photo below. With his death in 1893 it was demolished. The people watched and took away every bit of rubble as 'relics'.

All this construction left Mount Argus permanently in debt. In 1913 Fr. Sebastian Slean C.P., the Rector, ran a monster 'Ovada Bazaar' in the R.D.S., Ballsbridge, Dublin. The profits were sufficient to remove the final debt.

## Refurbishing

1924

In 1924 a major refurbishing of the Church took place under the direction of Brother Michael C.P. It involved not just a repainting of the interior but also the addition of many decorative paintings with representations of Christ and the Apostles, the Coronation of Our Lady, and St. Paul of the Cross. A solemn re-opening of the Church took place on 20th June 1924.

## Phase 3 - New Sanctuary and Student Wing

1936

The men were conscious that the Church building was not complete. The Sanctuary was built of rubble stone and only meant as a temporary arrangement. By 1936 it was decided to finish the task. Under Fr. Cronan Doyle C.P. the old Altar and Sanctuary were demolished and a new large transept and Sanctuary area were built. The design was that of a Mr. Powell, Architect and the work was carried out by Messrs M. O'Callaghan and Co. Ltd. The first sod was cut 3rd April 1936 and the additions took two years. At the same time a two-story wing for students was built at the rear forming the fourth side of a quadrangle. The Church was re-opened on 13th April 1938. After 79 years the work begun in 1859 was complete.



Workers with Fr. Adrian in 1937

*'First, give yourself to the exercise of holy mental prayer and meditate, especially on the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary.'*

*(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 71)*

## Dry Rot and New Roof

1985

By 1985 the roof over the original part of the Church was in need of repair. Fr. Brian D'Arcy C.P., the Rector undertook a major restoration and re-roofing that lasted one year. On 19th October 1986 another re-opening and re-dedication of the Church took place. The principal celebrant was Cardinal Tomás O'Fiaich DD, Archbishop of Armagh. This was the fourth dedication in its history.

1985 Renovations



# Blessed Charles of Mount Argus

The year 1893 had just begun when at 5.30 in the morning of 5th January another priest in Mount Argus Monastery died. Nothing remarkable one might say. Yet just after Christmas word had spread through the city that this elderly priest was sick and crowds had gathered to enquire about him. They heard he couldn't eat, had lost his sight and was like a living skeleton. They prayed.

The body of the priest was brought to the Church and lay in state for five days. Despite heavy snow, thousands filed past his coffin with the police keeping order. His funeral was said to have been bigger than Parnell's two years before. Finally his remains were laid to rest in the cemetery beside Mount Argus Church. His grave became a place of pilgrimage where people came daily to pray. His name was Fr. Charles but who was he?

Fr. Charles was born John Andrew Houben on the 11th December 1821 in the village of Munstergeleen, Holland. He was the fourth of a family of eleven children born to Peter and Johanna Houben. The family background was simple and Catholic with prayers morning and evening and children taught the Rosary. They worked in a flour mill owned by their uncle.

John Andrew's childhood was unexceptional. He was shy, quiet, pious, friendly and according to his brother was "always bright and cheerful in the family circle".

Even though he found study difficult, he walked the two miles to secondary school in Sittard for ten years. He wanted to be a priest and served Mass and visited the Church every day.

At nineteen, Andrew was enrolled for military service from 1840 to 1845 but only saw active service for three months. He was not an outstanding soldier. He spent too much time in Church! While in the army, he first heard of the Passionists and from that moment he decided to join them.

With his military service completed in 1845 Andrew, despite the initial reluctance of his father, joined the Passionists at Ere, near Tournai, Belgium. As a student he was remembered as cheerful and good-humoured and was ordained on Saturday December 21st 1850 in Tournai. His father had died in August of that year and none of the family could make the journey for the celebrations.



1857 Blessed Charles arrives in Ireland

In February 1852, he was sent to England where Fr. Charles first came in contact with the Irish who were emigrating to England in the wake of the Famine. He was transferred to Ireland to the newly-founded monastery of Mount Argus on July 9th, 1857. Dublin had a population of less than a quarter of a million - many of whom were British soldiers. It was not a saintly place, with many official brothels, licensed public houses and shebeens. Murders were common and moral standards questionable. Religious knowledge was hopelessly inadequate.

Charles was not a good preacher. English was not his first language and he never really mastered the language. He excelled in the Confessional and in comforting the sick. He was fond of the Irish and called them "my people". He respected their struggle against oppression and admired the way the Faith was preserved although he wasn't blind to their faults. He soon became extraordinarily popular not only in Dublin but all over Ireland and collected money throughout the length and breadth of the country to pay for the new monastery of Mount Argus.



## Fr. Eugene Nevin C.P. wrote of Blessed Charles:

*The simplest discourse on the Passion moved Fr. Charles to tears. Calvary was never absent from his thoughts. "Nevertheless he invariably carried about him a small crucifix, sometimes placed on top of his little devotional manuals as seen in the photo, but more often locked in his left hand palm. From time to time he could be seen to open the hand, look affectionately at the crucifix and raise it tenderly to his lips. I saw it after his death showing signs of long and frequent use".*



Charles c. 1881 (aged 60 yrs.)

It was his gift of healing the sick which is most clearly remembered. As many as three hundred people a day came to be blessed by him.

His fame spread and trouble came. Some medical doctors claimed that he discouraged people from going to the doctor. A claim which they later withdrew. Others took Holy Water blessed by Fr. Charles and began to sell it throughout Ireland. This was not Fr. Charles fault but he was transferred to England in 1866 and remained there for eight years.

Charles returned to Mount Argus on the 10th January 1874. He felt that once more he was among 'his people'. He remained here for the last nineteen years of his life. The daily pilgrimage of sick and distressed began almost immediately. He went out all over Dublin and into the country blessing people. He started on his fund-raising rounds again, but this time for the new Church.

During the last years of his life he had many trials. He was in failing health, and anxious about death. His family in Holland were dying whilst old injuries returned to plague him. Towards the end of 1892 it was obvious that the life of Fr. Charles was coming to an end. He said his last Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception 1892 and within a month he had returned to his Maker.

### The Blind See

In the year 1884 or 85, I was five years old and blind at the time. I was under three doctors all of whom gave no hope. My father and I were Protestants and my mother was a Catholic. My mother brought me to Father Charles who rubbed the relic on my eyes which were closed. After the first of the visit I saw the light. After the second visit I saw shadows. After the third visit I ran down the steps in front of my mother. On my father seeing that my sight had been restored he had me baptised a Catholic at Westland Row Chapel.

*George H. Porter, 202 Clontarf Rd., Dublin 1936.*

### The Deaf Hear

I feel great pleasure recording my cure by Father Charles about 40 or more a years ago at Mount Argus. I had been a patient three years at the Ear hospital and gave up all hope of cure. I attended at Mount Argus with the usual spiritual duties and prayers and on my third visit when he touched my ears before I had reached home I got my hearing and improved daily thank God.

*Joseph Verso, Coventry, England. 1923.*

### The Lame Walk

I, Mrs Dowling can certify I have been brought to his Holiness Father Charles when a small child. I was in bed I could not walk. I had to be carried into the little chapel in Mount Argus but walked out without any assistance, Thank God and his Holiness Father Charles.

*Mrs Kelly Dowling, Brownstown Road, Curragh Camp. 1923.*

### The 'Dying' Healed

I beg to inform you that in the year 1888 or 1889 my husband John Hughes who was dying from a complication of diseases and who was absolutely given over as incurable was visited by Father Charles, who after praying over him, turned to me and said "John will live". I think it right to let you know that to the surprise of four Doctors he improved at once and completely recovered. My husband died in the year 1918 aged 77 years.

*Anne Hughes, 111 South Circular Road, Kilmainham. 1923.*

## "Prayer Service" of Blessed Charles

At times appointed by the Rector, people came for Charles' blessing. Fr. Eugene Nevin described how Charles would emerge by slow degrees from the Monastery door. Then, in ones and twos and threes, people would approach him, the men uncovering, the women in prayerful attitude. As the procession moved slowly in the direction of the old church Charles would explain the Passion to them. On entering the Church Charles would kneel, even prostrate, pray, rise and begin to preach. When he had finished preaching, he would prepare the people to receive the blessing by inviting them to renounce the Devil, afterwards sprinkling them with holy water. Charles would begin to pray aloud, partly from a book and partly extempore after which he would give the blessing with the relic of St Paul of the Cross, praying that God, through the intercession of St Paul, would free those present 'from every evil of mind, soul and body, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. After this, he would pass through the crowd, blessing those who were sick and praying over them.



# Fr. Pius Devine and Fr. Arthur Devine

## Fr. Pius Devine



Born in Sligo in 1838 he became a Passionist in 1859. He had studied for the priesthood in Maynooth. After a retreat by Fr. Vincent Grotti and a reading of the life of Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham he decided to join the Passionists. Ordained in 1861 he was appointed Professor of Theology which brought him to Mount Argus in 1867 to teach.

From 1869-1872 he was Rector of Mount Argus and later 1875, Rector of Holy Cross, Belfast, where he commenced the building of the present monastery.

Fr. Pius had a great knowledge of the classics, spoke several languages, was a Gaelic scholar, and had an extensive and accurate theological knowledge. He wrote books on the lives of early Passionists and on theology.

After Ardoyne he returned to Mount Argus and continued teaching, interspersed with parish missions and retreats to religious communities. By the turn of the century his health began to fail and after ten years illness which never dulled his cheerfulness died in Mount Argus in 1912.

## Fr. Arthur Devine



Arthur, brother of Fr. Pius, was born in 1849 and professed a Passionist in 1866. His priestly studies were in Mount Argus and he was ordained in 1872.

He filled the office of Superior of St. Mungo's Retreat, Glasgow, from 1879 to 1881, and was elected Provincial Consultor in 1884. His main work was Lector of Theology for over forty years and author of at least a dozen substantial volumes dealing with mystical and ascetical theology. He contributed to the Catholic Encyclopedia and several reviews. He still managed to conduct missions and retreats. In Mount Argus he preached frequently and there was no priest more regular in attending his confessional.

Father Arthur was a Gaelic scholar, preached in Irish, and gave a course of catechetical instructions at Mount Argus in the native tongue. Confreres described him as retiring in disposition, humble, considerate in his dealings with others, and painstaking in all duties, Arthur loved the round of religious observance. All found him a friend to the friendless and afflicted. Father Arthur was beloved by those associated with him. He died in 1919.

## Fr. Pius Devine crossing the Andes on his journey round the world questing for Mount Argus.

"On Thursday April 16th 1874 I made the most wonderful and terrible journey in my life. There are two heights to be got over before one comes to The Cordillera or great pass of the Andes. They are almost perpendicular and each about 3000 feet high. The zigzag road has no protection whatever. The first hill we began to climb about 4.00 o'clock in the morning and got over it at 5.00. There was a small plateau then before we reached the terror of the Andes, the Portillo, which is so called because the path is paved with loose stones that slip at every step, and because it is so steep. We got over it about 6.00 and there was a beautiful round of winding paths, and saw a clear lake at this place 7000 feet above the level of the sea. It was grand to look about one and see the peaks which bemused us last night on a level with your feet. The air was sharp and cool and the sun was beginning to gild up the snow tipped peaks still higher than where we stood. Well we began to ascend the Height at half past seven and climbed on till the earth itself seemed to vanish from beneath us. The top is a ridge and into it, about 20 feet from the summit, is cut a path about 4 feet wide. We went along this for about ten minutes. I dared not look into the abyss, but I did not venture another. We reached at length the top, which was about 30 feet square and no more. Here we stood 12,400 feet above the level of the sea, a blast of wind, the slipping of a foot, the breaking of a girth, and we were dashed headlong into eternity. I'll never forget the state of my sensations as all this crowded upon my mind in the most dangerous pinnacle of the mountain. I got off my mule and made Fernando do the same. I gave the poor fellow, who was shivering, a horn of brandy and myself the same. I recommended my soul to God and began the descent on the other side."

*From his Diary 'The Adventures and Misadventures of a Jolly Beggar 1872-1874.'*



The Passionist 'Sign' consists of a heart shape, the symbol of Love, surmounted by a white Cross. It is a reminder of the Suffering Love shown by Jesus for us on the Cross.

The words in the heart are:

JESU	The name of Jesus in Latin
XPI	Contracted form of Christ in Greek
PASSIO	The word Passion in Latin

The text reads - 'The Passion of Jesus Christ' written in two languages Latin and Greek.

Underneath the lettering are three nails - representing the nails used to fix Christ to the Cross.





**Bro. Michael Behan C.P.**  
1822-1907

A Dubliner who lived 57 years as a Passionist. Faithful companion of Blessed Charles when he travelled the country questing for Mount Argus. He spent his last years in Ardoyne.

**Bro. Laurence Carr C.P.**  
1834-1915

From Belfast, he was at the death-bed of Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham. He was among the pioneering group to go to Australia to found the Congregation. He spent his last years in Highgate, London.



**Bro. Norbert McFadden C.P.**  
1848-1923

A fluent Irish speaker from Donegal, he volunteered for the Australian Mission in 1890. He returned to Mount Argus in 1915 where he died in 1923 aged 75 years.

**Bro. Mark Kangley C.P.**  
1848-1914

Born in Leeds, England he was noted for his artistic painting and decoration. His many large mural paintings grace our Churches. He died in Ardoyne in 1914 aged 66 years.



*I must first tell you that to draw greater fruit from Our Lord's teaching, you must listen to the Word of God, either oral or written, as if Jesus Christ himself was speaking to you.*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 39)



**Fr. Salvian Nardocci C.P.**  
1822 - 1896

Born in Carbognano, Italy, his mother died while he was young and was badly treated by his step-mother. He joined the Passionists in 1841 and was ordained in Rome in 1849. Although of delicate health Fr. Anthony Testa sent him to England saying he would outlive his companions.

Arriving in England in 1849 he guided the novices and in 1869 came to Mount Argus where he spent most of the rest of his life. He was a companion of Blessed Charles.

His writings on the history of the Province are his gift to posterity. He kept a Diary, a catalogued listing all those who entered the Province, Chronicles of Mount Argus and the Annals of the Anglo-Hibernian Province from 1842 to 1883. He died in Mount Argus in 1896 aged 73.

### From the Annals of Fr. Salvian Nardocci C.P.

#### July 3 1864

On this day died at Saint Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, our good student *Confrater Leo of the Blessed Sacrament, Holahan*. He was born near Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, 9 January, 1839. Received the holy habit of our Order at Broadway on 6 March, 1861, and made his profession on the seventh of the same month of the following year.

Since his entrance into the Congregation, Confrater Leo gave great edification by his faithful observance of the Holy Rules, by his punctuality in attending to his studies whilst in health, and his patience, resignation, and cheerfulness during a protracted illness of more than twelve months.

The disease under which he laboured was consumption, and for the last seven weeks before he died we were in daily expectation of his last. The immediate nature of his disease rendered necessary the continual attendance of his brethren for the seven weeks, and being fortified with the last sacraments, he rendered his innocent soul to his Creator.

# St. Mungo's, Glasgow - Founded 1865



St. Mungo's Church and Monastery

Fr. Ignatius Spencer and Fr. Joseph Bunn preached the first Passionist Mission in Glasgow in 1850. More Missions were to follow until in 1865 Passionists took over the administration of St. Mungo's parish. From this start innovative pastoral service was to emerge.

The superior was Father Eugène Martorelli. He wrote: "No sooner are we came here, we began in earnest, with the assistance of God, to improve the conditions of the mission by visiting almost every house, exhorting the negligent, and constantly hearing confessions".

For the spiritual and secular instruction of the children there were day schools, Sunday schools, and evening classes under the direction of the Marist Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy. The Brothers conducted the Christian doctrine society and the Sisters had charge of two of the sodalities.

In 1866 the energetic Fr. Osmond Maguire arrived as Rector. The church built in 1850 was too small. The old unused Deaf and Dumb Institution at the corner of Parson's Street and Glebe Street came on the market and he purchased it. The work of building a new Church on the site of the garden began immediately and was soon completed.

The first Scots-born superior was Father Albert McKillop, who became Rector in 1877 and developed the good work in the area with the addition of St. Mungo's Boys School in Glebe Street.

In the 1880s Fr. Oswald Rothwell was very active as chaplain to the City Poorhouse in Parliamentary Road.

The community still had no suitable accommodation for themselves. The old two-storey house of the deaf and dumb institution was unsuitable. Another of the great builders of the Province arrived in the person of Fr. John Mary McMullan. Committees were formed to collect money. On the 25th May 1891 the foundation stone for a new house was laid and by September 1892 it was ready for occupation by the monks. Later in the 1920s Fr. John Mary was to return to Glasgow and extend the Church.

Fr. Cornelius McGrath arrived in 1899 and there followed ten years of enthusiastic work. As Chaplain to the Prison he succeeded in getting an Act of Parliament passed to suppress immoral practices connected with young female prisoners. He established the Prisoners Aid Society to help the released prisoners to make a new start in life.

Around 1970 Fr. John Mary Griffin pioneered 'All Day Clubs for the Elderly'. Governments and Charities copied his ideas. Today the club still flourishes in St. Mungo's.

At the present time the work of the founders continues in St. Mungo's. High quality liturgical services are provided in the Church. Three schools are cared for in the parish with outreach to Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Strathclyde University.



Fr. Eugene C.P.



Fr. Cornelius C.P.



Fr. Albert C.P.



Fr. John M. Griffin

*'Come, let us have courage and never let the sorrowful remembrance of Jesus' pains depart from our hearts'*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 5)

# Holy Cross, Ardoyne - Founded 1868



In 1868 the Passionists preached a mission in Portaferry, Co. Down which drew great crowds and the impressed Bishop Dorrian invited the Passionists to Belfast. Through the Provincial Fr. Eugene Mortelli they accepted. A plot of land was purchased and the Crumlin Road, Ardoyne and Ligoniel area assigned to the Passionists. The new foundation was a parish.

In August 1868 Fr. Raphael Gorga, the appointed Rector, arrived with Fr. Alphonsus O'Neill and rented Edenderry Lodge. Eventually they purchased this house as the first residence. The first mass was celebrated in the Chapel of St. Vincent de Paul in Ligoniel on 5th August.

There was no Church but within three months of his arrival Fr. Ignatius Paoli had one built and opened on 10th January 1869. This was followed by the first Holy Cross Primary school for boys and girls in late 1869.

People responded immediately to the new Fathers. Mass attendances, Evening Devotions, Sermons, May Devotions and various Confraternities all flourished. Among the Passionists Frs. Joseph Carroll and Christopher Doyle dutifully attended the people. The Church was soon too small and Fr. Alphonsus O'Neill extended it.

A Monastery was needed and in 1877, under Fr. Pius Devine, Bishop Dorrian laid the foundation stone. Delays followed but eventually Fr. Norbert McGettigan finished the job and the 6th April 1881 Archbishop McGettigan of Armagh blessed and opened the new Monastery. It was the first built in Ulster since the Reformation.



Fr. Raphael Gorga C.P.



Fr. John Mary McMullan C.P.

It would be another twenty years before the present Church was built and opened in 1902. It was the work of successive Rectors - Fr. John McMullan, Fr. Malachy Gavin and Fr. Hubert Carruth.

The story of Holy Cross is one of Passionists and community working together, living the faith, struggling against economic deprivation and all, often, in the face of violent opposition.

The funerals of early Passionists were attacked on the way to Milltown Cemetery. A cemetery was opened in the grounds of the Monastery to avoid the problem. In various decades political and sectarian violence broke out. It was accompanied by internment, destruction of property and loss of life. Today, a fragile peace reigns but violence can erupt at any time.



Faith and Destruction

# 19<sup>th</sup> Century - Debt, Confraternities, Preaching Missions

## The Debt

In 1863 the new monastery was opened at the cost of £12,000. In 1878 the new Church had been added and blessed. The Rector, Fr. Alphonsus O'Neill reported to Rome that the debt was £24,331. The community were barely able to support themselves and pay the interest as well. Huge energy went into collecting money.

Blessed Charles travelled the country questing for donations. It also gave him the opportunity to minister to the poor and sick - blessing and comforting people. At home in Mount Argus events were continually held to make money. What the modern world would call 'Garden Fetes' were held regularly and referred to as Bazaars. In 1862 there was one in the grounds of Mount Argus. In 1876 a Grand Bazaar was held in the Rotunda Rooms in what is now O'Connell St. The fundraising efforts continued.

Finally in 1913, while the energetic Fr. Sebastian Slean was

Rector, the Great 'Ovada' Bazaar was held in the RDS Grounds in Ballsbridge.

Opened by Madame de Navarro (Mary Anderson) famed London Shakespearian actress and friend of the Passionists in Broadway, Worcestershire, it ran for a week and attracted 77,205 visitors. There were 59 stalls, 9 refreshment stands and a variety of entertainments.

It was a huge undertaking with a committee that reads like a 'who's who' of Dublin of the day. Turnover was a massive £12,068 and the profit was £8,108. It just about wiped out the Mount Argus debt which at the time stood at £8,200.



Fr. Sebastian Slean C.P.

## Confraternities

In Italy in the 1700s it was customary after a Parish Mission to organise groups of laity into what are called 'sodalities' so they could spiritually be supported and support one another. St. Paul of the Cross followed the custom. In Veroli he formed a sodality of men and called them the 'Brotherhood of the Passion' for whom, at their request, he wrote a Rule of Life in 1755. Other Passionist groups modelled themselves on the 'Brotherhood of the Passion'.

One hundred years were to pass. Then in the Pontificate of Pius IX, when sodalities and confraternities flourished, Fr. Ignatius Paoli C.P., later to be involved with the Passionists in Ireland, petitioned the Pope to sanction the formation of the Archconfraternity of the Sacred Passion under which all the various Passionists sodalities would unite. The petition was granted in 1863. One lack was that the original rule for the Brotherhood had been lost. The spirit of St. Paul of the Cross lived on in the various groups he formed, Paul's writings and other rules written by him. A new Rule was written which in various times was adapted and re-published according to the needs of different cultures.

In Ireland the man most associated with the Archconfraternity of the Passion was Fr. Sebastian Keens C.P. (1831-1891). He lived in Mount Argus most of his priestly life alongside Blessed Charles. Whilst not considered a great orator he had the charisma to influence people and in his missions throughout Ireland brought many back to the faith and directed many souls into religious life. Having many friends among those of influence he worked successfully to collect money for Mount Argus. His greatest work was the bringing of the Archconfraternity of the Passion to Ireland. He founded branches in Passionist Churches and whenever he could in other Churches on Missions. In his enthusiasm for the confraternities he published various editions of their Rules

and Regulations and a wide variety of Prayer Manuals, some running to over hundreds of pages.

His work left a variety of branches of the Archconfraternity of the Passion in Mount Argus in the twentieth century - the habited, men's, women's, boys' and girls' branches. All branches had services once a month on a weekday evening with Sermon and Benediction.

On Sundays they had their special mass with general communion. In the 1950s the largest group was the Boys Confraternity who filled the Church. They organised clubs, dances and football leagues. The habited branch were committed to saying extra prayers and were stewards in the Church. Up to the 1930s they had the privilege of wearing the full Passionist habit.



Fr. Sebastian Keens



'Habited' Branch 1932 - Fr. Adrian (with sandals), on his left Fr. Valentine

## Mission - Cork 1879

From 4th May to 25th May 1879 the Passionists conducted a mission in St. Finbar's Cork. The Missioners were Frs. Bernadine, Austin, Athanasius, Anthony and Aloysius. The account that follows is based on the report in the Freeman's Journal 30th May 1879.

"The Mission opened on Sunday, 4 May, with Dean Neville, Parish Priest carrying the Mission Cross into the Church followed by the Mission Fathers and the clergy. On reaching the sanctuary the Cross was presented to the Superior of the Mission Fathers who placed it on the platform and the Mission was declared open.

The Missions of the Passionist Fathers are generally limited to three weeks, but then it must be remembered that these Missioners take no day nor even an hour of vacation. The work commenced at 4.45 in the morning and ended when the last penitents left the church near midnight. The Fathers preached, instructed or heard Confessions all day long. The people responded with an immense number of 15,000 Communicants during the last two weeks. For the last ten days the church accommodation of 4,000 people was found insufficient and a distinct service and sermon had to be given to an additional and more numerous congregation in a field behind the church.

In this place an ample platform was raised and an altar erected thereon for the closing ceremony of the Mission. This took place on Sunday evening. At 7 o'clock two of the Fathers, one within the church, the other outside, commenced the closing service and address. Between the two assemblies there were fully 10,000 people. They listened with fixed attention as for two hours, with unflagging zeal and superhuman effort, Fathers Athanasius and Anthony exhorted, admonished, denounced, encouraged, as they dealt successively with the future, the present, or the past of their hearers.



Fr. Bernadine C.P.



Mount Argus - Crowd at Foot of New Calvary

Then came the moment of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and the deepening twilight was suddenly illumined by the flashing of thousands of candle lights held in uplifted hands, and the people renounced the devil and proclaimed their Faith in Christ.

The writer concluded - 'a good work has been done among us'.



Fr. Eugene Nevin C.P.



Fr. Kieran Farrelly C.P.

## The Easter Rising 1916

It was well known among the community in Mount Argus in 1916 that the two priests most sympathetic to the Irish Volunteers were Fr. Eugene Nevin and Fr. Kieran Farrelly. Fr. Eugene was from Ballinakill in Co. Galway and Fr. Kieran was from Kells, Co. Meath.

On Good Friday Night 1916 the Preaching of the Seven Last Words of Christ was in full swing in Mount Argus to a packed Church. Fr. Leo Gribben, then a student, was at the back of the Church when a number of men approached and asked for confession. In the absence of Fr. Eugene, who was preaching in another Church, Leo got Fr. Kieran who heard the confessions in what is now a secretary's office. The men included Pdraig and Willie Pearse, Joseph Mary Plunkett and Eamonn Ceannt. Plunkett lived in Larkfield House near Mount Argus and Ceannt was from Dolphin's Barn. After confession they asked to enter the Church for the sermons but the Church was packed. Fr. Leo led them through the sacristy and put them among the Passionist students near the altar.

During Easter week as the fighting continued Fr. Eugene and Fr. Kieran ministered to the men of Marrowbone Lane Garrison of the Irish Volunteers.

One of the Leaders of the Rising was Desmond Fitzgerald, father of a later Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald. He escaped through the military lines. Fr. Eugene was asked to help and with Fr. Kieran made a makeshift bed in the organ gallery in Mount Argus for him. Having slept soundly behind the organ they sneaked him into the monastery. The next day was Sunday and Desmond attended mass in the Church and mingling with the Congregation made his escape to his home in Bray.

# Missions - The Preached Word

## We Preach Christ Crucified

In 1863 a press report on a Passionist Mission in Killinkere, Co. Cavan reported:

“The mission, from its commencement to its close, was one glorious triumph of grace. From the second day crowds flocked to the confessionals. Night after night hundreds remained in the church in order to secure for themselves the chance of a place in the confessional for the following day. The assistance rendered by the neighbouring clergy was invaluable. Two bishops and twenty-five priests were earnestly engaged hearing the confessions of the multitude, yet without being able to effect any apparent diminution of the vast crowd which was constantly receiving new supplies from the influx of fresh penitents, and thus the stream poured to the very last hour. The renewal of the Baptismal Vows and the Papal Benediction, which was the concluding ceremony of the mission, was grand and imposing. It took place in the open-air. There were about 25,000 people present.”

Today this might read as an exaggeration but in Ireland after the Great Famine this was a normal occurrence. At the time a religious enthusiasm welled up from the people that fed a great Catholic Revival.

Wherever a mission was held they flocked to the services and confessional. At first the bishops and clergy were overwhelmed but as vocations increased they were better able to respond to the people. New religious orders arrived specialising in preaching. The Vincentians, already in Ireland, were joined by the Rosminians, Redemptorists, Jesuits, Passionists, and Oblates.

Preachers were in constant demand for retreats to Religious priests, brothers and sisters and Diocesan Clergy.

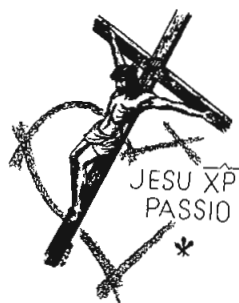
For Passionists a mission opened with a solemn procession carrying the large ‘Mission Cross’ into the Church and its enthronement in the Sanctuary. Each day a meditation was preached on the various events during Christ’s Passion and Death. There was also a short ‘Passion Motive’ consisting of a Passion reflection and short prayers to Christ on the Cross.

## Passionist Mission

A Passionist Mission was centred on Christ Crucified. For St. Paul of the Cross the Crucified Christ was to be the centre of Passionist life. Passionists were to spend time at the ‘Foot of the Cross’ and there discover Christ Crucified and his Love for each one of us. The ‘forgetting’ of this love was at the heart of the evils of the world. Passionists were to spread a ‘remembering’ of the Passion of Jesus by people through prayer and meditation. Thus would the Crucified Christ’s redeeming love be brought into the world. For Passionists preaching was at the heart of spreading this Devotion to Christ Crucified. In Ireland the Passionist Mission became for them a golden opportunity to preach the ‘Word of the Cross’.

In the confessional they sought to bring the love of Christ to the penitent. They claimed to roar like a lion in the pulpit but behave like a lamb in the confessional box. Over the years the long hours in the confessional box took its toll on the health of many missionaries.

In the early part of the 20th Century, Missions were often associated with the Temperance Movement. After the Second World War they were a feature of the life of every parish. Usually held every three years they supported the spiritual life of the Parishioners with a ‘new’ preaching voice and an ‘anonymous’ confessor. Their function was ‘maintenance’ rather than ‘evangelical’.



Fr. Hilary Barry

*'Friday is the Feast of my Most Holy Mother of Sorrows. Recommend me much to her so that there may be impressed on my heart her sorrows and the Passion of my Jesus. I desire that more and more, and I would imprint them on the hearts of all so that the world would be on fire with holy love.'*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 98)





Frs. Gerard O'Neill and Austin Tierney, Passionists  
Parish Mission in Gurteen, 1937



Packed Congregation



Learning the Craft

*'He who is transformed into Jesus through love does not find a place to rest except on the precious cross. Holy Cross! When will I glory in nothing but you, most Holy Cross?'*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 41)

## Daily Mission Programme

Each day began with early Morning Mass with preached Meditation on the Sufferings of Jesus.

During the day time was set aside to visit the sick and the lapsed.

In the Evening the Mission Devotions were held which began with a Catechetical Instruction which was followed by the 'Great' Sermon. The service concluded with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Then the hearing of Confessions began and could continue into the night.

The number of preachers varied according to the size of the parish and the number of Churches. A country parish with two Churches could be handled by two men while a large city parish might need four or even six men.

Every Passionist wanted to be a preacher. Before Lent and after the Summer the 'Mission List' would be published on the notice board. They were awaited with great excitement and all hoped for two 'missions' in Lent, one in May and another in the Autumn.



Aloysius Cusick



Daniel McCloskey



Luke Delaney



Clarence Daly



Dermot Power



Malachy Geoghegan

# St. Gabriel's Retreat, The Graan, Enniskillen



Original Two Storied Monastery

In 1908 the Businessman, Mr. Anthony Cassidy offered 'The Graan' to the Passionists and in 1909 Fr. Mark Gavin C.P. arrived to found a novitiate house for Passionist Novices. A small temporary Church was built. Novitiate life began and for the next 67 years the formation of future Passionists was carried on here. St. Gabriel's Retreat, The Graan, Enniskillen was born.

In 1920 a new two-storied monastery was occupied. A new Church was completed in 1926 and paid for by Mr. and Mrs. Moore of Phoenix, Arizona, USA. In 1937 a top storey was added to the Monastery.

All through the years The Graan has been a spiritual centre for the people of a wide surrounding area for Mass, Confession and healing.

The Passionists have always been available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Over the years this apostolate of Penance has been maintained and continues today despite the fall-off in the general frequency of people going to Confession. Most ordinary days will bring between 30 and 50 penitents to The Graan. First Fridays and Festivals increase the numbers. This ministry is their most valued contribution to the local community. In addition every day brings others who wish to consult a priest, seek counsel or ask for a blessing.

In 1976 the Novitiate moved to Crossgar and postulants took up residence in St. Gabriel's. In the same year the capacity of



the Church was doubled. By 1992 with no more postulants the large monastery was sold and became a Nursing Home with the building renovated and extended. A new smaller residence was provided for the Passionists.

The modern era has seen the Retreat become a centre for Prayer Groups who avail of the facilities of the house and the direction of the Passionists. Young people join the Anam Cara Young Adult Group, which meet monthly for prayer and sharing. The priests are chaplains to the adjacent Nursing Home providing Mass, Sacraments and comfort to the residents.



Fr. Alphonsus McGlone



Bro. Malachy Daly



Fr. Athur Kerrigan

## Fr. Ignatius Gibney C.P. 1889 - 1952

A Passionist always remembered in Enniskillen. For years he ministered in St. Gabriel's bringing reconciliation and healing to the crowds who came to him with their troubles.

At the same time he travelled Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales preaching at which he had few equals -

*"In his dramatic delivery and spontaneous gesture he was inimitable; in his versatility he was unequalled. He could touch and pierce and win the heart of the hardened sinner, and he could fire with fervour every member of a convent community; he could enthral a church of tiniest children, and he could enrapture a congregation of Cistercian monks. And all would plead that they might again be favoured with the blessing of his services"*

(His Obituary Notice)







**Mount Argus Superiors with 1922 Ordination Class**

Front Row - Frs. Austin Tierney, Kieran Farrelly, Oswald Donnelly, Richard Curran, Ambrose Hayes, Lambert Hayden, Sylvester Palmer.  
 Middle Row - Alexis Boyd, Conleth Boothman, Thomas Mackenzie, Paul Cyril Doherty, Columba Daly, Michael O'Donnell, Clement O'Shea, Rupert Lennon.  
 Back Row - Stephen Lafferty, Victor Louchran, Gerard O'Neill, Stanislaus Cross, Cronan Doyle, Bonaventure Thom.



**Ardoyne 1966**

Front Row - Frs. Timothy, Theodore, Fergus, Hugh (Golden Jubilarian), Paul Mary, Lambert.  
 Middle Row - Wilfred, Denis, Dominic, Daniel, Jerome, Honorius.  
 Back Row - Brendan, Bro. Paschal, Bro. Basil, Bro. Francis, Declan, Bro. Denis, Bro. Angelo, Finbar.  
 Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Priesthood of Fr. Hugh Keegan C.P.

# Passionists and Policemen in Ireland

Since their foundation the Passionists have had a special relationship with the local Police. St. Paul of the Cross had been saved in a snow-storm by a policeman. In the mid-1700s Pope Benedict XIV entrusted the care of the Italian police to the Passionists and Fr. John Baptist De Rossi C.P. became their spiritual guide. In the late 1800s another Fr. John Baptist (Byrne) C.P. was to become spiritual guide to the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

The DMP relationship with Mount Argus began with the Police Band playing at the Grand Bazaar in the Rotunda Rooms in the then Sackville Street in the summer of 1876. The Bazaar was to make money to pay for the roof of the new monastery. Later in 1893 the police were present in large numbers to control the crowds at the funeral of Blessed Charles.

In the same year with the permission of the authorities, two Passionists, Fr. John Baptist Byrne and Fr. Andrew Ivory visited the city police stations to promote a Passionist Retreat at Mount Argus. The curious constables were struck by the two priests in their distinctive habits displaying their mission crosses in their cinctures. It was highly successful and even reported in Freeman's Journal. It began a tradition carried on for one hundred years of an 'Annual Garda Mission'. 1893 was also the year that Chief-Superintendent John Mallon became Assistant Commissioner. He was considered a dependable officer who had intimate knowledge of the other policemen's lives and was concerned about their welfare.

In the late 1800s times were difficult and conditions poor for policemen. Their pay was inadequate. Their code of discipline contained 'fines' for misconduct that often induced debt. Many of the men were driven to drink and in two years of agitation 500 policemen had been injured. There were policemen from the country whose families could not afford the cost of a funeral at their native place. In 1881 an Inspector Edward Entwistle initiated a Canteen Fund for the purchase of burial plots and the provision of headstones and railings for their burial. Plots were bought in Mount Jerome and Glasnevin.

In 1897, the fifth year of the DMP Retreat at Mount Argus, Chief-Superintendent John Mallon in a circular letter to all the stations launched the DMP Catholic Obsequies Association and recommended that the care of the graves should be a charge on the Band Fund. Fr. John Baptist Byrne who gave the first retreat for the DMP and now a firm friend of Mallon collaborated in establishing the association.

A group of 3 Inspectors, 3 Station-Sergeants, 3 Sergeants and Tug-of-War hero Constable Thomas McBennett held the inaugural meeting at Mount Argus on 12th January 1897 with Mallon in the chair.



**Centenary Dinner 1993**

Fr. Dermot Cleary, Fr. Eugene McCarthy, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, Minister for Justice, Garda Commissioner Patrick Culligan, Fr. Clarence Daly, Fr. Ralph Egan.

*'The certain path is that of faith, that is, to pray in lively faith with a continual memory of the Passion of Jesus.'*

*(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 86)*

## Passionist Spiritual Directors Obsequies Association

- 1893 John Baptist Byrne
- 1897 Mark Gavin
- 1899 Athanasius Ryan
- 1900 Wilfred O'Hagan
- 1904 Bernard Mangan
- 1908 Eugene Nevin
- 1909 Mark Gavin
- 1910 Ephraem O'Connell
- 1914 Joseph Smith
- 1915 Hugh Keegan
- 1916 Anthony Doherty
- 1920 Xavier Beale
- 1926 Frederick Matthews
- 1927 Sylvius Rudden
- 1931 Ephraem O'Connell



1893 John Baptist Byrne

- 1932 Gerard O'Neill
- 1936 Frederick Matthews
- 1937 Gerard O'Neill
- 1939 Frederick Matthews



1942 Casimer Birkett

- 1942 Casimer Birkett
- 1953 Kieran McIvor
- 1955 Raphael Shortt
- 1957 Clarence Daly



2000 Joseph Kennedy

- 1983 Columb O'Donnell
- 1985 Ralph Egan
- 1992 Dermot Cleary
- 2000 Joseph Kennedy



**Blessing of New Gates 1963** - Officers of Dublin Metropolitan Division with Fr. Clarence (left) and Fr. Aidan O'Reilly

Fr. John Baptist also attended and on the second day of the inaugural meeting he was elected as chairman while Fr. Mark Gavin, Passionist, was appointed spiritual director. Fr. John Baptist remained President of the Association until 1901.

At a meeting on the 11th March 1899 the Association decided, on the death of a member, 'to take the necessary steps in consonance with the wishes of the deceased's relatives to have the remains removed to Mount Argus'. The decision cemented the burgeoning friendship between the policemen and Passionists and gave lasting strength to the young association. As a result incalculable spiritual benefits accrued to policemen and their families down through the years.

Over the years Passionists have accompanied the Gardaí on their pilgrimages to Rome and Lourdes. Funerals of Police who died in the line of duty have been held in Mount Argus - in 1905 Constable Sheahan, Garda Fallon in 1970 and recently in 2002 Garda Tighe and Garda Padden. In 1993 the Gardaí celebrated their Centenary Thanksgiving Mass in Mount Argus.

The Obsequies Association has over the years beautified Mount Argus with many gifts. In 1909 they presented the original gates and later the modern gates in 1963. The chapel dedicated

to St. Patrick in the ambulatory behind the altar was presented by the Garda Síochána. In more recent years, a lift was installed in the monastery for the benefit of infirm members of the Community; and the Association also donated the modern granite baptismal font.

In 1957 Fr. Clarence Daly took over as spiritual director. With extraordinary dedication and boundless energy he served the spiritual and wider social interests of members of the Garda Síochána for 26 years. He was in Rome with the Garda Diamond Jubilee Pilgrimage in 1982 and concelebrated mass with Pope John Paul II. Father Clarence's unique contribution to stability in the Force during a critical period of its history will not be properly assessed until the annals of the modern organisation are compiled.

History was made at Garda Headquarters on 22 March 1989 when Father Ralph Egan celebrated Mass on the eve of the departure of a Garda contingent for duty with the United Nations in Namibia, South-West Africa. In an historic homily, Father Ralph said: "You are being offered a unique challenge, to carry into effect in another country for the first time in history the ideals of the Garda Síochána."

Fr. Joe Kennedy C.P. carries on the chaplaincy work today.



The Baptismal Font



Mount Argus Gates



St. Patrick's Altar

# Mount Argus becomes Provincial House

Mount Argus belonged to the Anglo-Hibernian Province of St. Joseph which included the Passionists foundations in England (four), Wales (one), Scotland (one) and Ireland (three). At the Provincial Chapter in June 1926 it was proposed to divide the Province in two.

There were thirteen capitulars at the chapter and they discussed the advantages and disadvantages 'exhaustively and dispassionately'. They voted by secret ballot on three proposals. The first, to divide the Province was passed nine votes to four; the second, that Glasgow be included in the 'Irish' province, was passed thirteen to one; and finally it was unanimously passed that the division take effect immediately. By 1927 the authorities in Rome had approved and Fr. Sebastian Slean became Provincial until the first Provincial Chapter of St. Patrick's Province met in 1929 when he was elected Provincial.

In 1929 the young province considered itself to be small with 79 priests and brothers and 18 students. By 1953 the number of students peaked at 36. The number of priests and brothers rose to 200 in 1965. The increasing numbers were to make new demands in finding work for priests and accommodation for the students. After 1970 vocations dropped steadily and many of the younger religious chose another way of life. By 1991 the number of religious had dropped to 118 - a drop of 50% since 1965. The remaining religious were all ageing and living longer. Houses opened to cater for the large numbers had to be closed.

At the time of the formation of the Province Ireland and Scotland has plenty of diocesan priests for parish work. Bishops were not keen to allow religious orders to make new foundations. The problem was usually solved by 'religious

orders' taking on a foreign mission territory. By the middle of the 1930s it was decided to undertake a 'foreign mission' but the Second World War intervened.

## St. Mary's, Drum-Mohr

In the meantime, to provide accommodation for students and work outlets for priests, it was decided to expand in Scotland. In 1931 Drum-Mohr, outside Edinburgh, was opened and a community of priests and students installed. Students were to continue to go to Drum-Mohr until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The priests gave missions where possible and helped the local clergy by saying Sunday masses. The house took over responsibility for the pastoral care of people in Prestonpans and Wallyford. By 1971 there were few priests left in the house and it was closed leaving three men to care for the parish of Prestonpans and Wallyford.



St. Mary's, Drum-Mohr

During the Second World War Mount Argus was full of students and Drum-Mohr was unavailable. A new foundation was made in Collooney, Co. Sligo in 1943. This was quickly followed by St. Michael's Retreat, Dankeith near Kilmarnock in 1946. Philosophy students were now divided between these two houses. Theology students remained all the time in Dublin.

## Provincials 1927 - 2000



Sebastian Slean  
1927 - 1935



Adrian Convery  
1935 - 1941



Gerald O'Boyle  
1941 - 1947



Cronan Doyle  
1947 - 1953



Fergus Loughrey  
1953 - 1956  
1957 - 1962



Cyprian Aylward  
1956 - 1957



Valentine McMurray  
1962 - 1974



Salvian Maguire  
1974 - 1980



Aidan Troy  
1980 - 1986



Ignatius Waters  
1986 - 1992



Bernard Lowe  
1992 - 2000

## 'Our Own Foreign Mission'

Expansion on the 'foreign mission' field became a reality immediately after the Second World War. A team of four Passionists went from Mount Argus to Tanganyika. The project did not develop and further expansion was planned for Scotland. Fatima House, Coodham, near Dankeith was opened as a House for residential Retreats and Conferences. Just after its opening the Province got its 'own Foreign Mission' when Bechuanaland was offered. This was accepted and development now focused on Africa.

### Dankeith and Fatima House

Dankeith was used as a House of Studies but it had very little apostolic outreach. It was situated in a mainly non-catholic area. By the mid-fifties all the philosophers were in Dankeith and none in Collooney. In 1964 the last students left Dankeith. Within two years the house was closed.

Fr. Fabian Grogan was Rector until 1953 and noticed that a forty roomed mansion about a mile away on the main Kilmarnock to Ayr road was on the market. On his advice the house was purchased by the Province and became Fatima House Coodham.

Fatima House flourished as a retreat house and later as a conference centre. After the Second Vatican Council it became a leader in Scotland in promoting the Council's teachings. Under Fr. Raphael Short many international experts in theology, scripture and liturgy graced its summer schools. In the late eighties high maintenance costs, inadequate facilities for the 'ensuite' age, and drop in personnel led to its closure in 1989. The few remaining community moved to White Craigs and then Glanlora.

### St. Joseph's, Collooney

When Fr. Austin Tierney got permission from Bishop Morrisroe to start a house in Collooney it was viewed as a unique opportunity for Passionists. The house had been a sanatorium belonging to the County Council and the land was belonging to the Diocese. Both were sold to the Passionists. With three railway lines running through the town it was ideal for travelling preachers.



Fatima House, Coodham



St. Michael's Dankeith

In the early sixties the Province needed more modern accommodation for students. St. Joseph's was chosen and a new sixty-room monastery built and as in the building of Mount Argus the previous century the province was once more in the stranglehold of debt. The house served as a student house for a few years. Vocations were few and after the Second Vatican Council it was thought desirable that student houses should be near centres of learning. All the students were accommodated in Mount Argus.



St Joseph's, Collooney

In the seventies the new building was sold to the North-Western Health Board when it became a centre for the Mentally Handicapped. A smaller house was built for the remaining community who served the Chapel and local community until about 2000.

### St. Patrick's, Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar

The Juniorate forms the first stage of training for Passionist Religious. It provides second level education for boys wishing to become Passionists. This was first sited at Sandymount, Dublin from 1914-1919. Here the young Eamon De Valera taught mathematics and began his long friendship with the Passionists. In 1923 the school reopened at Wheatfield House, Crumlin Road Belfast. Almost thirty years later the Juniorate moved to Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar in 1952 where it remained until it closed in 1980. During the last years the pupils were bussed to St. Patrick's High School in Downpatrick.

In 1976 Tobar Mhuire became the Novitiate for the Province. By 1982 the old Juniorate buildings had been converted into a small Retreat and Prayer Centre. Individuals, Faith Groups and Prayer Groups continue to use the house as a resource centre for human and spiritual development.

Over the years Tobar Mhuire has served as an important centre for the people of south Down for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each week brings a steady stream of callers seeking a priest for the Sacrament and a word of spiritual comfort.



St. Patrick's, Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar

# Overseas Missions

A request from Rome in 1936 for an 'English-speaking Irish priest' to go to Tanganyika resulted in Fr. Theodore Matthews from Mount Argus travelling there and thus began the adventures of St. Patrick's Province in Africa. Two years later he returned to Ireland to gather more priests but the Second World War intervened. In 1946 Fr. Theodore, Fr. Fergus, Fr. Vivian and Fr. Matthew went on an 'emergency' mission to the Italian Passionists in Tanganyika. They remained in East Africa for six years. At the time there were sufficient missionaries in East Africa and the Province looked elsewhere for a territory.

In 1951 the Province got 'its own foreign mission' in Southern Africa. In 1952 Fr. Theodore with Fr. Carthage, Fr. Norbert and Fr. Urban set out for Bechuanaland with four Cross and Passion Sisters. The country was the size of France with a fertile strip along the east where the population was centred and with the Kgalagadi Desert in the south and the Okavango Swamps in the north.

More priests, brothers and sisters followed and the three small missions at Kgale, Lobatse and Ramotswa were developed with new missions at Francistown, Morwa and Mogoditshane. In 1955 Passionists opened parishes in Carltonville and Westonaria in South Africa.

By 1959 the mission became the Prefecture Apostolic of Bechuanaland with Fr. Urban Murphy as the new Prefect Apostolic. And in 1966 he became the first Bishop of the Diocese of Gaborone, which covered the whole country. Here he would remain until his death in 1981.

Bishop Murphy was succeeded by Bishop Boniface Setlalekgosi, a Batawana, who had been his catechist and trusted adviser. By 1981 the number of missions had grown to 17 with each mission having three or four outstations. The Sisters of Calvary had been founded. Many Priests, brothers and sisters had worked there and now with reduced numbers help

## Mission Life 1954

It was October 1954 and Frs. Germanus and Ronan, with African helpers, were on the way to Kgoro for Mass. It was during the rainy season. The journey went well until the plain of Kgoro, a flat 'pancake', where the road vanished beneath flood waters. The truck skidded and lurched and suddenly lodged securely in three feet of mud and water. The fathers got out in their waders and also got stuck in the mud to the tears of laughter streaming down the African's cheeks. All hands got to work and the truck was freed. They reached Kgoro to be met by a silent crowd. "There will be no Holy Mass today for the Church has gone with the rains". The mud walls of the Church had collapsed. Quickly an African hut was prepared and, like Calvary, in humble surroundings the people celebrated their Mass.

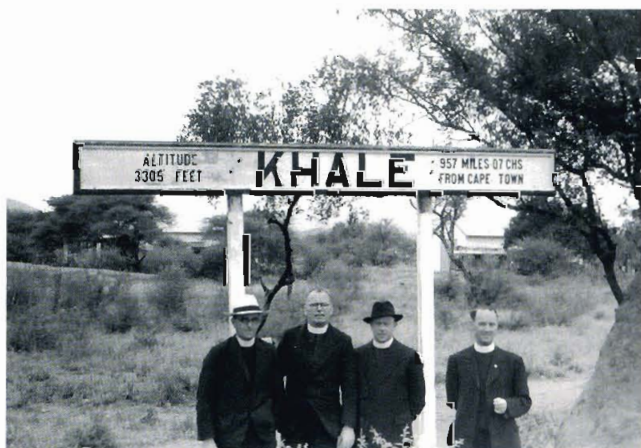
was sought from other Missionary groups. The Passionists moved to the south of the country and the Divine Word Missionaries took over the north where the Diocese of Francistown was created.



Bishop Boniface and Bishop Murphy

Passionists began to focus on founding the Passionist Congregation in Southern Africa. By the year 2002 there were six African Passionist priests and varying numbers of students in Formation. Passionists Religious Houses could be found in Botswana at Forest Hill, Gaborone and Molepolole, and in Irene, near Johannesburg in South Africa. The three small missions in 1952 had, by 2002, grown to two Dioceses with 28 parishes between them and a Catholic population of nearly 50,000.

*'Prayer is to be made in the way of the Holy Spirit.'*  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 116)



Bechuanaland, l to r: Fr. Norbert, Fr. Theodore, Fr. Cathage, Fr. Urban



An African Liturgy



Sr. Olcan and the Sisters of Calvary

## Paraguay, South America

After an appeal By Pope John XXIII for priests for South America the Province assigned Frs. Salvian Maguire, Theophane Cooney and Benedict Collier to Paraguay in 1964. They staffed three small towns - Nueva Australia, Nueva Londres and La Pastora, in Coronel Oviedo. They built up the Catholic community and were replaced by Frs. Canice Feehan and Philip Behan. Beginning in the early 1970s a shortage of vocations in Ireland led to no further appointments to Paraguay.



Priests, Brothers and Students gather for the 1993 Joint Congress of the Botswana and South Africa Vicariates.



1966 - Group gathered in Mount Argus for talks by Fr. Barnabas Ahern C.P.

Front Row L to R - Frs. Stanislaus, Hilary, Luke, Raymond, Dermot, Aidan (Rector), Christopher, Barnabas, Valentine (Provincial), Cronan, Clarence, Maurice, Macartan, Sebastian. Second Row L to R - Denis, Honorius, Marius, Killian, Edmund (behind), Bro. Martin, John Francis, Celestine, Paul Mary (behind), Columb, Brendan, Fabian, Hubert, Malachy, Oliver, Cormac, Timothy, Jude, Casimir, Felix, William. Third Row L to R - Anselm, Theodore, Finian, Osmund, Cyril, Livinus, Philip, Joe, Ambrose, Fintan, Myles, Cosmas, Sylvius. Fourth Row L to R - Placid, Wilfrid, Bernardine, Nicholas, Frederick, Gabriel Mary, Jerome, Bernard, Conleth, Anthony, Ailbe, Ignatius, Arthur, Vincent Mary. Fifth Row L to R - Laurence, Herman, Brendan, Alfred, Joseph, Eugene.

# Parish Ministry

Passionists minister in parishes because of the Crucified Jesus. They are there to bring the Love and Power of the Crucified One to the parishioners. They are a presence who in their ministry hold the hand of those who portray the many images of Christ Crucified. Passionists and parishioners discover together the reality of Christ Crucified.

Up to recent times in the Passionist Rule of Life there was a regulation not to accept parishes. Yet in 1862, the great General, Fr. Anthony Testa, declared that if it was necessary for the salvation of souls then Passionists should accept parishes. When in 1865 St. Mungo's in Glasgow and in 1868 Ardoyne in Belfast were founded they included parishes. Later with the foundation of the student house in Drum-mohr Passionists began working the Prestonpans and Wallyford, eventually accepting parish responsibility for that area. For many years Passionists had ministered to the English-speaking community in Paris and in 1971 that became the responsibility of St. Patrick's Province.



For nearly one hundred years Ardoyne was the only parish served by Religious in Ireland. With the shortage of diocesan priests and the increase in population after the 1960s Mount Argus took on parish responsibilities in 1974. Later in 2004 a second parish in Dublin - Huntstown was accepted.

Parish work involves the regular round of masses, confessions, baptisms, marriages and funerals. The Passionist brings to the sick and dying in their homes and in hospitals the 'Love of the Crucified'. In ministry Passionists seek to be available for people who came for guidance. In visiting homes the Passionist becomes a presence in people's lives.

Church services are complemented by Confraternities, sodalities, Legion of Mary, and St. Vincent de Paul. Today parish councils and committees are all part of the life of a parish.

Where communities gather buildings are required. Schools, Churches, parish halls and priests' residences have to be provided, expanded and maintained in all parishes.

Education and the pastoral care of children are an important aspect of parish life. The regular round of First Communions, First 'Confessions' and Confirmations became moments of celebration shared by the school and parish community.

Over the years parishes of the Province have responded in different ways to the social needs of the parishioners. Scout troops and youth clubs were formed. Various dances and outings were organised for young adults. Many couples met at these events and married. Clubs for the elderly were formed where they could meet their peers and enjoy each others company.



Preaching



On Pilgrimage - A Prayer



Way of the Cross



Confirmation



Baptism



Marriage





**Provincial Chapter 1980 (First three rows)**

Front Row L to R - Frs Marus, Maurice, Fabian, Sister, Oliver, Aidan (Provincial), Ignatius, Eustace, Conleth, Columb  
 Second Row L to R - Bro Pius, Frs Aidan, Dermot Patrick, Eugene, Bernard, Flannan, Bro. Paul, Germanus, John Francis, Aquinas, Mel, Bro Angelo  
 Third Row L to R - Frs Joe Kennedy, Pancras, John, Augustine, Gabriel Mary, Dermot, Paul, Brendan, Laurence, John, Nimian, Cyril, Brian D'Arcy



**Provincial Chapter 2004**

# Apostles of the 'Mass Media'

Passionists seek to spread the Word of the Cross and one method favoured was through the written word. In the late 1800's Frs. Pius and Arthur Devine published works on Theology and the lives of the early Passionists. Fr. Sebastian Keens published his many editions of the Rules and Regulation of the Archconfraternity of the Passion and various books of popular devotion. A Mission Manual, with various prayers, examination of conscience, hymns and popular devotions of the Passion of Jesus, was available for people attending Missions.

The distinctive written word of the Passionists coming from Mount Argus was articulated in the magazine The Cross. The 'father of The Cross' was Fr. Joseph Smith who founded the journal in 1910. It was an immediate success and despite varying fortunes the journal was published for a period of seventy years. Fr. Joseph was editor for 12 years building up the magazine but First World War took a heavy financial toll which hindered development. Fr. Angelo McCunnin took over the editorship in 1922 and during his four year stewardship made great improvements. The circulation increased dramatically and the debt was wiped out. Without him The Cross would have disappeared. He had placed The Cross under the patronage of Our Lady and in thanksgiving his friends helped him to have erected in the middle of the 'pond' at Mount Argus a statue of 'Our Lady of the Lake'.

In 1914 a fourteen year old Francis Tierney won a prize for his essay 'My Favourite Book' published in 'The Cross'. Later as Fr. Austin he was to become editor until 1931. Next in line was Fr. Edmund Burke who fulfilled the task with great literary skill and innovation. While editor, Edmund conducted a multitude of preaching exercises. Among his published works were 'Hunter of Souls', a life of St. Paul of the Cross and 'Happy was my Youth', a life of St. Gabriel. Both books were translated into many languages.

After Fr. Aidan O'Reilly fulfilled the task for two years he was followed by Fr. Dermot Power in 1952, who was editor for eleven years. Dermot, a well-respected preacher, kept up the standards and circulation of the magazine. After his second term of five years finished Fr. Edmund Burke handed over to Fr. Brian D'Arcy in 1971. Both had introduced new formats

and designs for The Cross updating it to respond to the modern needs of the 1970s. However, with competition from the expanding media of radio and television, The Cross, like many religious magazines could not survive financially. Fr. Columb realised this and The Cross ceased circulation in 1980.

While Editor of The Cross Fr. Brian D'Arcy had moved into Radio and over the years had many programmes on RTE 1, 2FM and BBC. To date, he has published ten books, contributed to numerous documentaries on Radio and Television in Ireland and Britain. The tradition of Passionists on the Radio goes back to 1943 when Frs. Christopher, Valentine and Edmund initiated, during Lent, a series of highly successful talks on the Passion of Christ. Radio work is continued by Fr. Pat Rogers and Fr. Aidan Troy.

Fr. Brian was the first priest in Ireland to be accepted as a full-time member of the National Union of Journalists in 1972 and has continued his contributions to newspapers. Over the years Fr. Luke Delaney, Fr. Augustine Hourigan and Fr. Aidan Troy have written regularly in the print media.



Fr. Brian D'Arcy and Fr. Edmund Burke

*'Jesus, who is our Way, our Truth, our Life,  
be always the one object of our consolation. Amen.'  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 89)*

## Editors of The Cross



Fr. Joseph Smith C.P.  
1910-1922



Fr. Angelo McCunnin C.P.  
1922-1926



Fr. Austin Tierney C.P.  
1926-1931

Fr. Edmund Burke C.P.  
1931-1952 & 1965-1970

Fr. Aidan O'Reilly C.P.  
1952-1954

Fr. Dermot Power C.P.  
1954-1965

Fr. Brian D'Arcy C.P.  
1971-1979

Fr. Columb O'Donnell C.P.  
1979-1980

# Into the Future

After 150 years Mount Argus and the Passionists look into a challenging future with hope - the same hope that inspired the founders.



'New' Mount Argus

Numbers in the Province are decreasing and vocations are few. Already The Graan near Enniskillen has downsized from a large monastery to a smaller one. Mount Argus and Ardoyne now follow the same path. Plans are in progress to build a smaller 'Mount Argus'. In Ardoyne a four bed roomed house is planned beside the Church.

Unfortunately smaller numbers mean withdrawing from some foundations. Shortly the parish in Prestonpans, Edinburgh will be handed back to the Diocese. The Province will continue to be involved in running the English speaking Church in Paris - St. Joseph's, Avenue Hoche, with help from other Passionist Provinces throughout the world.

## Outreach

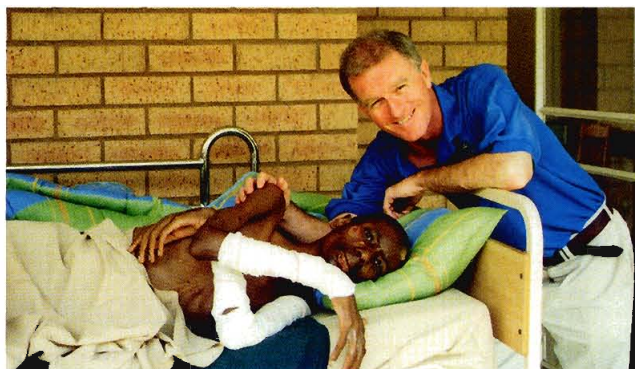
With the slow demise of parish missions **Mount Argus** became a parish in 1974. In 2003 responsibility for the parish of **Huntstown**, Co. Dublin, was accepted. Fr. Eugene McCarthy accompanied by Fr. Ralph Egan and Bro. Martin Denny serve the parish. There is a significant immigrant population with many nationalities represented in **Huntstown**. With numerous young couples there is a constant effort to provide school places for the children.



Archbishop Martin opens Chapel of Ease, Littlepace Huntstown

In **Belfast** a Passionist community ministers within a context of sectarian strife and division. Here Frs. John Friel, Pat Duffy and Tommy Scanlon live. They seek to promote reconciliation and the rebuilding of individuals and communities. They work in a cooperative way across denominations, genders and ethnicities.

In **South Africa** it is now 21 months since Fr. Kieran Creagh opened the doors of Leratong Hospice for Aids patients. Having just admitted their 300th patient they continue to learn with their patients the art of how to care for the dying and particularly those with Aids. The Hospice and Palliative Care Association of South Africa have designated Leratong Hospice as a model of inpatient palliative care for other hospices in South Africa.



Hospice - Fr. Kieran Creagh C.P.

*'Greeting you with a sincere heart, we leave you  
and all your house in the Sacred Side of Jesus.'  
(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter 54)*

## Moments of Hope

During late 2005 and early 2006 the miracle for the canonisation of Blessed Charles was approved. Mount Argus looks forward to the final decision that he will be canonised in the not to distant future.



Fr. Emmanuel Kabinga C.P.

August 2006 brings hope from the Passionists from the Province in Southern Africa. On the 5th August Patrick Mphepo from Malawi, made his final profession as a Passionist and looks forward to his ordination in 2007. On the 19th August in Livingston, Zambia, Emmanuel Kabinga was ordained a Passionist priest. The work of the Passionists and their successors who set out from Mount Argus in 1952 continues to bear fruit.

“Take your stand and watch at the crossroads;  
enquire about the ancient paths;  
ask which is the way that leads to what is good.

Take that way and you will find rest for yourselves.”

*Jeremiah 6:16*



Passionist Sign worn by  
Fr. Paul Mary Pakenham (1821-1857),  
First Rector, St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus.

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