



SPIRITAN NEWSLETTER



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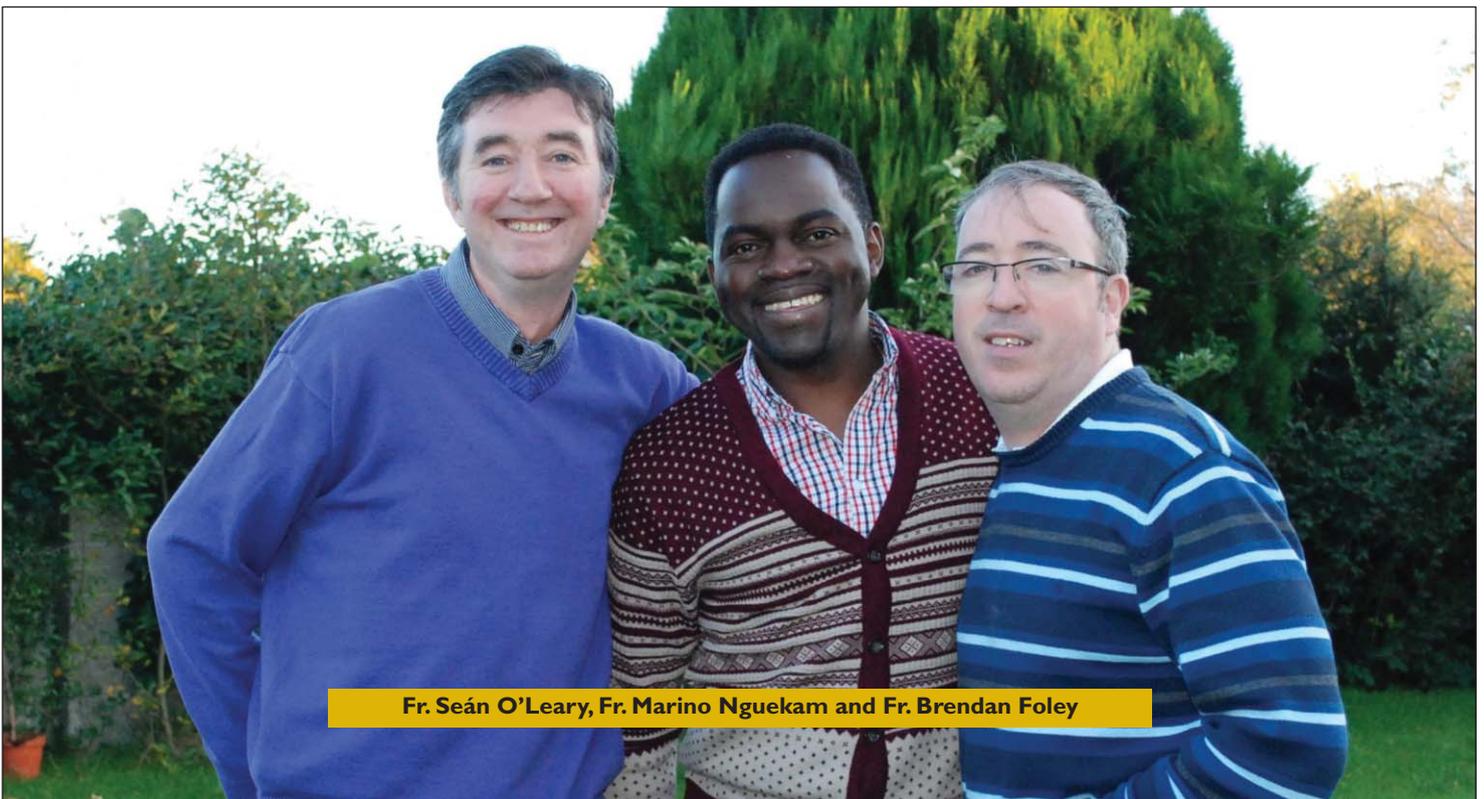


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Spiritan Parishes in Clondalkin, West Dublin



Fr. Seán O'Leary, Fr. Marino Nguekam and Fr. Brendan Foley

In 1988 the Spiritan Provincial Council approached the Archdiocese of Dublin about the possibility of opening a Spiritan parish in a disadvantaged area on the periphery of the capital. In September of the following year Bishop Dermot O'Mahony and the people of Bawnogue parish in Clondalkin received the first three priests from the Congregation to minister there.

Today Fr. Marino Nguekam C.S.Sp. is the parish administrator. In Bawnogue since 2006, Fr. Marino, who is a native of Cameroon, was privileged to have been asked to sing in Croke Park in the closing Mass of the International Eucharistic Congress in 2012. Fr. Brendan Foley C.S.Sp., who has responsibility for Irish Spiritan youth services, is also Bawnogue-based.

The adjoining parish of St. Ronan's, Deansrath has been administered by the Spiritans for over a decade and was selected in 2008 as a 'pilot project' on how to develop good pastoral relationships with Travellers. Fr. Seán O'Leary C.S.Sp., recently arrived in the parish, comments that he has been 'very enthused by the richness and colour of the celebration that so many different cultures and nationalities add to the Sunday Eucharist in Deansrath, making it a true sign of unity in diversity'.

Other Spiritan works in the Clondalkin area include the Newlands Institute for Counselling. Two Spiritan priests and one Spiritan Associate are among the personnel providing this important service which offers low-cost counselling to individuals and groups in West Dublin.

Spiritan Youth Day

Over 550 fifth-year students from all Spiritan schools in Ireland participated in the second annual Spiritan Youth Day, in Dublin on October 11, 2012, the first day of the Year of Faith. This year the theme was 'One Heart, One Spirit'.

The aim of the day was to allow students to come together as a single community and to encourage them to believe in themselves while developing a personal relationship with Jesus. Students were invited to stand shoulder to shoulder with each other and share a day of faith and fun that engages their spirituality and their search for meaning.

Spiritan Youth Day is co-ordinated by a team of representatives from each school and led by the Faith Development Officer from the Spiritan schools' trust.

The day included a musical performance from each school, as well as prayer, liturgy, talks and facilitated workshops to explore further the theme of the day. There was huge cross-curricular student participation in the day through the logo competition, acrostics writing and the musical interludes.

Among the speakers at the event were Fr. Jack Meade C.S.Sp., Baroness Nuala O'Loan and Greg Fromholz (Director of 3Rock Youth).

Miriam Omoro, a service-user of SPIRASI – see below – gave a personal account of having to flee her native Uganda and of what it is like to have to leave one's homeland due to fear of persecution.

SPIRASI

SPIRASI – the Spiritans' asylum-services initiative – was set up by the Province in 1999. It came as a response to an increased need for a range of services for people resident in Ireland who had fled their homeland as victims of torture. Eager that it would be synonymous with a warm welcome for those who sought refuge in Ireland, its first Assistant Director, the late Michael Murray C.S.Sp., said that 'coming to SPIRASI should be like falling into cotton wool'.

SPIRASI has provided a range of services including education and training to torture-survivors from a vast range of countries. Its specialist Medical Legal Reports are made available, as required, to asylum-seeker clients whose applications to have their refugee status recognised in Ireland are under examination.

Speaking on the occasion of the United Nations' Day in Support of Victims of Torture in June 2012, President Michael D. Higgins remarked that "Since its establishment in 1999, SPIRASI has provided rehabilitative supports to over 3,200 survivors of torture from over one hundred different countries. While this indeed is a sobering statistic, it is also an indicator of the enormous well of compassion that lies at the heart of SPIRASI, an organisation that continually fulfils its mission to protect, rehabilitate and integrate survivors of torture, and other vulnerable people."

The President added that "SPIRASI gives enormous practical support to those damaged and helpless people who arrive on our shores in a desperate search for safety. Those supports include medical assessment, psychotherapy, outreach support, assistance to integrate into their new-found home and, of course, that all-important listening and believing ear."



President Michael D. Higgins and Greg Straton of SPIRASI at 2012 UN Day in Support of Victims of Torture

New volunteers with Spiritan Mission Services

Three new volunteers have been assigned by Spiritan Mission Services. The office was established by the Irish Province to create a place for the increasing number of people who, motivated by the Gospel, wish to share Spiritan mission whether overseas or in Ireland.

Marcela Monteiro de Oliveira Lasmar and Patric Lasmar, from Brazil, spent several months with the Spiritan community in Kimmage Manor while studying at the Kimmage Development Studies Centre. They are now settled into the development programme of São João de Deus Parish in Nampula, Mozambique.

Marcela, a psychologist with a background in community work, is co-ordinator of the Murima Owarya Community Nutrition Centre and Wiwanana Waathiyana Sewing School, while her husband, Patric, who is an economist, is co-ordinator of the Libermann Technology and Communications Centre and Community Library.

Dermot Donaghy, a businessman from Kilrea, Co. Derry, joined the Spiritan mission in Kenya in late September 2012 and is working with the Kwakakulu Integrated Development Project.

Run by a local committee of women assisted by Fr. John Mahon C.S.Sp., this project provides education, food security and a sustainable livelihood to AIDS orphans and their guardians. Dermot's job is to enhance managerial, technical and agricultural skills in the local community and also to develop the computer programme at the Springhill Polytechnic in Kwakakulu.



Death of oldest Spiritan

The death occurred in October 2012 of Fr. Tim O'Driscoll C.S.Sp. who, at 102, had been Ireland's oldest living Spiritan.

It was during Fr. Tim's nine-year period as Provincial that the first Irish Spiritan presence in Brazil was established, in 1963. Over a dozen members of the Province are currently in the South American country and will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary in 2013 of the arrival of the first group from the Province.

A native of Kerry, Fr. Tim had spent more than half of his ministry in Rockwell College near Cashel, Co. Tipperary and is buried in its community cemetery.

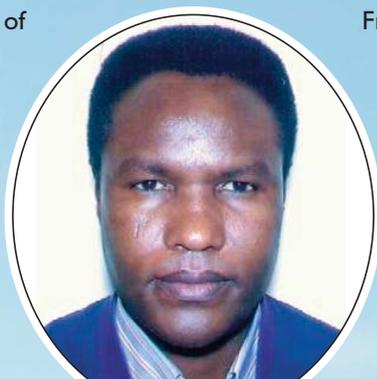
The late Fr. Tim O'Driscoll at his 100th birthday party in Kimmage with fellow Valentia islander and Gaelic football legend, Mick O'Connell.



First African on Irish Provincial Council

Following a Chapter of the Irish Province of the Spiritans earlier in the year, a new Provincial Council took up office in September 2012. For the first time ever, its 5-person team includes an African member of the Congregation, Fr. John Laizer.

Fr. John, who is one of two Tanzanian Spiritans in Ireland, joined the Congregation in 1989 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2000 in his home parish in the Monduli District of Arusha. Prior to coming to Ireland in 2007, he had been on mission in Zimbabwe where he engaged in pastoral ministry for three years and was Director of Spiritan Scholastics for the remaining period.



Fr. John Laizer C.S.Sp.

Fr. John currently ministers, alongside Fr. Joe Poole C.S.Sp., in St Bride's Parish in Ballintubber in the Diocese of Elphin. His role as Assistant Pastor there combines parish ministry with chaplaincy in Castlerea Prison.

As well as being the Spiritan who will oversee the Province's other activities in the West of Ireland, Fr. John is the 'correspondent' with the 16 Irish Spiritans in the East African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda as well as the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius and the Republic of the Seychelles.

Other African Spiritans who are currently ministering in Ireland, in areas including parish work and chaplaincy, come from Cameroon, the Gambia and Nigeria while Fr. Michael Fillie C.S.Sp. has recently returned to his native Sierra Leone after completing a sabbatical in Ireland.

Reflections for Advent 2012

*"Get the Lord's road ready ...
All low plains must be filled up, all
hills and mountains levelled off; the
winding roads must be made straight, the
rough paths made smooth, and all
humankind will see God's salvation!"*
(Luke 3: 4-6)

"Prepare a way for the Lord"



Vivat International Ireland
Prayer reflection for
Advent 2012



The Spiritans are one of a number of religious congregations who are members of VIVAT International, an organisation set up to lobby at the United Nations in favour of the poor and the marginalized and for the protection of creation. (See <http://vivatinternational.org/>).

A Prayer Reflection for Advent 2012 is now available at <http://www.spiritan.ie/AdventBooklet.pdf>

Safeguarding



Liam Lally



Jane Ferguson

A review of safeguarding in the Irish Spiritan Province, undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, was published in September 2012.

In its work to implement the recommendations of the review, the Province has since strengthened the capacity of its Safeguarding Office with the recruitment of two professionals in the area.

Mr. Liam Lally is the new Designated Officer and Ms Jane Ferguson is the new Support Person for victims and their families. See <http://www.spiritan.ie/Safeguarding.pdf>