



Growing up in the Cathedral Parish

Continued from page 1 -> for sale or conacre. He had 'chains' and could mark out the exact measure of any bit of land and he got a little money for that and he mended clocks too! Tommy's mother knitted home-spun cardigans from wool spun by Mrs. Connell. She was a spinner in Fr. Conefrey's time. There were lots of musicians too, John Canning and Maggie-Anne played the fiddle Tommy their brother made spinning wheels. A suit of clothes did a man for years and years. You would wear it to Mass, take it off immediately you came home and put on the working clothes. He recalled his mother, who came from Bornacoola, tell of a man who got a great coat from America and it was borrowed and worn to every marriage and funeral in that area for years!!

There were lots of skills and crafts too, John McGee was a great creel maker. You got a shilling for a creel of turnips at the market and a creel held fifty turnips. Tommy smiled as he recalled the excitement threshing when John Reynolds and the big horses arrived pulling the threshing machine and the craft of John Clarke thatching a roof and topping it off with bobbins of golden straw. "They looked very well sure no one can thatch at all now". At night the men walked a path through the fields along the Camlin to James Bracken's house in Kiltybegs for a game of cards. But life did change and improve. He recalled buying his first tractor in Smiths in Cavan and Jack Stewart came along to advise him. It cost £200 and he later recalled buying a haymaker machine. Tommy often

went to Dublin on the old steam train. And in more recent times he and his sister Rose went on tours to Scotland and England with the Historical Society. "Ah, they were lovely and very interesting," smiled Tommy. The grandfather clock chimed. Time to go. No! Not before I had a cup of tea with himself and Peter. Lily his Yorkshire terrier got excited. As I was leaving he showed me a prayer card. 'Bishop Colm gave me that when he called here one day. A grand man, sure you'd never think he was a bishop at all, says Tommy. What a lovely visit I had. Good health and many more happy years to you Tommy in your lovely home in Derryharrow.

- In conversation with Kitty Hughes.

CANON SEAN O'ROURKE R.I.P.

REFLECTION



Canon Sean died in Athlone this summer at the wonderful age of 97 years. The news of his passing was greeted with sadness throughout the diocese but nowhere more so than in our parish, Templemichael and Ballymacormack, where he served as curate for over ten years from around 1958 to 1968.

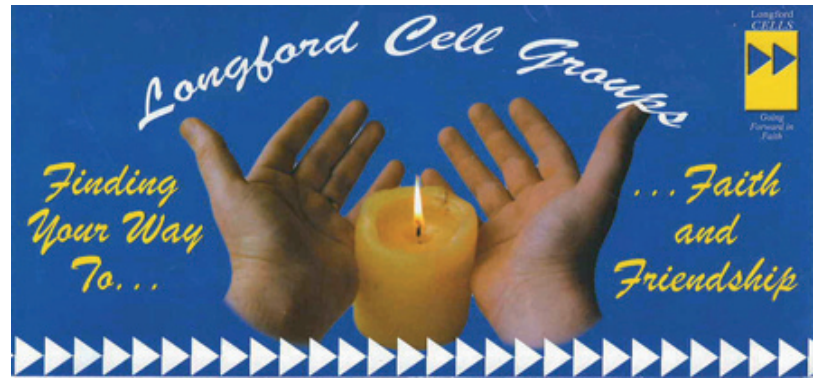
I was just a young boy when he arrived in the presbytery and I got to know him very well through being an altar boy. I was also his neighbour, and self-appointed messenger boy for Anne their housekeeper who repaid my labours with left over desserts. But in fact he was everyone's friend. With his lovely charming personality he was a winner all the way.

When you served his Mass he always thanked you and often on a summer morning he would invite those who served on a trip to Tarmonbarry that evening where he loved to swim. "Be at the gate at five sharp". Often 4, 5 or even 6 would turn up and were bundled into the back of his meticulously minded black Volkswagen Beetle and off we went. He enjoyed his swim and kept a watchful eye over us as we did our dogs paddle along the wall. I was often invited to accompany him to station Masses in various houses "out the country". When Mass was celebrated and dues and oats money collected, we would sit down to a beautiful breakfast and I would listen rapturously to the wonderful chats he would have with the men. He was knowledgeable on many topics, but space travel was one that enthralled him. This was the age of the Sputnik and his great admiration for the Russians and their achievements had me worried as Sr Cecelia in her sodalities had told us they were bad men and had us praying for their conversion. The happy years I had as an altar boy were slipping by and the time had come for me to head off to St Mels College, believe it or not, as a boarder. This meant that my contacts with Fr Sean were less frequent.

However at the end of my second year the annual sports were being held on the Senior Field and Fr O'Rourke, out for his daily walk along the Bishop's Road, came in to watch. He spotted me lining up for the "220 yards" and declared to all and sundry that "my old friend Leo will surely be last". You see he knew about the desserts!! I won the race and he was the first to congratulate me. The following day he sent down a large box of Terry's All Gold chocolates to make up for his lack of faith in me and also because he heard it was my birthday. The chocolates did not last long but the memory of his lovely gesture will stay with me forever. Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam. - Leo Donlon.

Parish Cell Groups in Longford

Catholic Cell groups began in the 1980s as a way of people sharing their faith with others in their parish. In our parish there are four cell groups established for a number of years with between four and fourteen people in each group. Those who are part of these groups have found it a great support for their faith and daily lives.



Cell groups go back to the early Church when before there were any churches or cathedrals Christians met in one another's houses to pray and celebrate Mass. Last year the Parish Cell organisation, which is particularly strong in Milan, Italy and Florida, USA, was formally recognised as a movement within the Catholic Church by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Cell groups in Longford meet in their houses or community hall every fortnight

between September and June. Each meeting begins with an opening prayer; followed by hymns; then listening to the Gospel for the following Sunday Mass; sharing thoughts on the passage by the members of the group; then listening to a reflection on the Gospel by Fr. Kelliher on CD; prayers of intercession; the recitation of the Our Father; followed by a cup

of tea and a chat. The meeting lasts about an hour and a half.

You are warmly invited to come along to a cell meeting to see it all for yourself. There is no obligation to continue. It is open to parishioners and non-parishioners. Some cell group members host the groups in their houses in turn but there is never any expectation that a member will host the group meeting. Like the cells in the human body it is hoped that the cells grow and divide and become more numerous.

It started with one group in Longford Parish - there are now four groups here and one in neighbouring Killoe. For further information please contact any of the following: Catherine Corkery (086-2622327); Elaine Keogh (087-2413214); Joyce O'Hara (043-3331728); Bernadette Wall (043-334771).

Co. Longford Historical Society



Founded in 1967, Co. Longford Historical Society continues to foster an awareness of the rich history and traditions of our county. The past year has included the following:

Lectures: The Society's varied 2010 lecture programme has featured talks on aspects of Longford's history: 'The Creation of Co. Longford in 1570', 'Crime and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Longford', 'Emigration from Co. Longford', 'The history of Longford I.C.A.', 'The Development of Technical Education in Co. Longford' and 'Buildings of Co. Longford.' Lectures are very well attended and non members are always welcome.

Publications: The next issue of the Society's journal 'Teabhba' is due in 2011. The past year has seen the launch of three important publications which received funding from Co. Longford Historical Society - 'Longford Historic Town Atlas', 'Townlands Map of Co. Longford' and 'Longford: History and Society'.
Current Projects: Early in 2010 the Society commissioned a survey of the stained glass windows of Co. Longford. Magnus Archaeology has completed the survey and it will be available early in 2011. The Society is also helping to sponsor a feasibility study in the vicinity of Corlea Trackway.

Newsletter: Each month the Society's 350 members receive a newsletter, which keeps them informed of current developments and, in the 'Times Past' section, highlights moments from Longford's often turbulent history.

Tours: Members travelled on day trips to the Boyne Valley in May and to Cavan in September while the annual five day tour in July covered Mayo and Galway.

Seamus Mulvey R.I.P.: Members of the Society were deeply saddened to learn of the death of former Secretary Seamus Mulvey in June. **Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.**

Membership: If you are interested in joining, contact teabhba@gmail.com or phone 043 3348821. Annual membership is only €15 for an individual, €25 for family. Life membership is €150.



Longford Prayer Group members on their annual retreat in Boyle recently with two of the Sisters from the Galilee Community Prayer Centre.

Prayers for all

Longford Prayer Group has been on the go for the last three decades meeting every Monday at 8pm in St. Joseph's Hospital for a time spent together in prayer and song. On the first Monday of each month the group gathers for the Rosary and Mass in the hospital chapel and afterwards come together for a cup of tea. The group has roots in the charismatic movement and prays for people's intentions and offers thanksgiving to God for our many blessings. Many of the group go on pilgrimage to Medjugorje for a week each summer. For the last two years the

group has gone for a day's retreat with our spiritual director Fr. Kelliher to the beautiful 'Galilee Community' centre just outside Boyle overlooking Lough Key run by the Sisters of Mercy.

Our latest day of recollection was held on Saturday November 27th last and was a good inspiration to making the season of Advent a prayerful time.

We wish everyone a blessed Christmas, thank all those who have supported us during the last twelve months and invite you to come and join with us in the New Year.



Crib, St. Mel's College Chapel 2010

Acknowledgements:

All associated with the production of the Parish Review would like to express our thanks to all who have assisted us in many ways. We express our gratitude in particular to the following: Helen O'Sullivan, Parish Secretary, Groups and organisations who submitted articles and photographs, Longford Leader, Roscommon People and all who assisted in any way. We invite any group who would like to be included in next year's edition to email parishreview@hotmail.com with their details.

Thank you.

*Parish Review Editorial Team:
Tom Chapman, Deirdre Dalton, Tiernan Dolan,
Leo Donlon, Fr. Tom Healy, Kitty Hughes
and Sive McGuinness.*