

# the Reds

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH REDEMPТОRISTS



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Applying COVID-19 restrictions: Mass being celebrated at Mount Saint Alphonsus, Limerick and at Furancungo, Mozambique

## AND LIFE GOES ON..

The pandemic, COVID-19 has changed many things, including the way we conduct ourselves as Church. Read about how our ministries have adapted to an online presence. *See page 2.*

## CELEBRATING SIX DECADES OF REDEMPТОRIST MISSIONARY WORK

Read about the first Irish Redemptorists in Brazil. *Story on page 6.*



# NEW LIFE ONLINE

Forced to shut down many of its ministries, the Church had to discover new ways of spreading the Good News.

By Gerard Moloney CSSR



History will recall 2020 as the year COVID-19 stopped the world in its tracks. Normal life was disrupted, health care systems were overwhelmed and the global economy wobbled as if hit by an earthquake. The impact on the church and church ministry was no less traumatic.

After the country effectively closed down in mid-March, churches were obliged to close their doors also. Normal religious activity came to a halt.

Had this crisis hit even 20 years ago, it would have been impossible to maintain any kind of public religious service, but the advent of the world wide web and of video technology meant it was possible to reach out to people even from

behind locked church doors. People could take part in religious services without having to venture outside their homes. The link between church and the people of God could be maintained.

Fortunately, our main Redemptorist churches have had an online presence for quite some time. We already had a significant online ministry on which we could build during the lockdown. In addition to daily Mass, the Redemptorist community in Limerick, for example, celebrated the Rosary online every evening as well as daily exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Stations of the Cross were also celebrated weekly during Lent as we prayed for those affected by the deadly pandemic. Our online congregation

at home and abroad grew as people discovered our ministry and as word of mouth spread.

There was also a significant increase in the numbers logging on for daily Mass, with much larger online congregations for the Sunday liturgies.

Our major annual novenas also took place online. The original theme for this year 2020 was '2020 Vision - Seeing with God's eyes.' But given the changed circumstances, we decided instead to focus on the theme 'Hope in a time of crisis.'

The experience was unlike any in the past. Instead of a packed church during the nine-day festival of faith, the novena took place wholly online. Instead of the traditional ten sessions per day, only four sessions

## ZOOMING MEITHEAL


Meitheal is primarily about coming together to support others. In March when we were faced with school closures and lockdown we quickly discovered that we could not come together. We also discovered that there were many videoconferencing platforms that could help us continue the programme in some way online. With that, we decided to see what was possible. With twenty eight schools it meant a logistical nightmare of getting parental consent for all students as well as learning a new way of meeting young people.

Our plan was to meet with each team of eight to ten students online with the Scala team just to keep contact and connection. We had a meeting with every school for about an hour before beginning a second round of meetings. In round two we met with three schools together. Working online is no substitute to meeting in person but working online was the only way to maintain contact and we decided to embrace it fully.

All of these meeting took place in the middle of the summer months and to our surprise we had over 90 per cent attendance of students during the meetings, which was really fantastic. It had always been our plan to meet with the students in person for more training and we were lucky to be able to do that at the end of August and beginning of September. We had two days of training onsite with all the safety procedures in place.


Fr Brian Nolan highlights the necessity of technology for youth work



With the October lockdown we have been forced back to online monthly meeting to hear about the progress of each team. It's great to get those reports in from the teams about all that is happening in their schools. Meitheal is about coming together and Zoom has brought us together. 

took place. Instead of a full car park and festive crowds, people were able to join from any part of the world without even having to step outside. The prayers, the preaching, the singing were the same as always. Only the circumstances had changed.

And it worked. Numbers increased significantly during the nine days, with people joining in from all around the world. Though separated physically, there was a real sense of being united spiritually - all through the wonder of the world wide web.

Necessity is the mother of invention, they say, and that has certainly proven to be the case during this extraordinary, unforgettable year. We hope that 2021 will see a return to business as usual, but that we will also continue to find ways to make the best use of the internet as a vehicle to proclaim the Gospel. 



Evening prayer from Clonard church



An empty St Joseph's church, Dundalk



The candlelight session at St Gerard's novena, Dundalk



A sign of hope from Clonard



Good Friday ceremonies at Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick

## THOUGHTS FROM A DISTANCE

As our country and indeed our world began to close down and wrap our heads around the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation it caused and continues to cause, we all tried to adjust to a new way of being, of living and working. For all involved in church ministry we had to begin to re-image ways to remain connected with our congregations, and offer support and solidarity during these difficult times. Technology has allowed us to provide an extra means of communication with our local and global communities. In April of this year the Irish Redemptorist began an online project called *Thoughts from a Distance*. The challenge was set to the Redemptorists and lay co-workers to record from their homes and monasteries short reflections to keep us connected and motivated. Many people stepped out their comfort zone and in front of the camera to enable this project to happen. They mastered new technology skills and shared graciously of their time. The outcome was 56 short videos which inspired and brightened our days during the first phase of lockdown, 250,000 people watched these videos and the feedback was hugely positive. As I write Ireland has been locked down for a second time and our public worship has been cancelled so we have decided to bring back *Thoughts from a Distance 2.0*. We hope you continue to watch and be inspired. Stay safe we will get through this.

## THOUGHTS *from a distance*



Those who took part include (clockwise): Fr Brendan Keane CSsR, Helena Connolly and Sr Máire Bríd OSSR

# COVID-19 IN FORTALEZA

Fr Tadhg Herbert CSsR reports on efforts to bring hope to Brazilian pandemic victims



Fortaleza is a city of over four million people, on the north eastern coastline of Brazil. It is a tourist location for many foreign visitors and the state has invested a lot in the tourist business. The metro system is near completion after many years of delays, flyovers have been built, pedestrianised areas and cycle lanes are among many other improvements in the city over the past few years.



Distributing the food parcels

However, when you move out of the tourist trail you see a very different reality and the social divide can be seen quite starkly. In the outskirts of the city there are sprawling shanty towns (*favelas*) where there is massive poverty. The state has invested little or nothing in these areas. In these sprawling poor areas there is no sewerage systems, rubbish piles up all over the place as collection is sporadic, schools are very often neglected and in the need of massive renovations and in health clinics, it can be very difficult to get an appointment with a doctor. In the rainy season large areas are flooded and families have to leave their homes in the dark of the night, leaving behind most of their belongings. These areas are also controlled by the drug gangs and every

now and then there is an outburst of violence between rival gangs. In January this year, just before the outbreak of the coronavirus the police went on strike which caused chaos in the city. There was havoc especially in the poorer areas as buses were burnt, causing fear among the people and the city came to a standstill for almost three weeks.

It is in this context that the COVID-19 arrived and has left a huge trail of suffering and pain over the past few months. The first few cases were located in a well off housing area called Aldeota and spread in those first few weeks mostly among the more wealthy and those who had travelled to destinations outside of Brazil. Our constant fear was the possible devastation it could leave in the favelas and poorer areas because in these housing areas large families live in small houses and a number of different generations live together in very confined dwellings. People spend a lot of time on the street, sitting out talking to neighbours. In those early days in March our fear was

what could happen if big numbers got infected in those housing areas. Hospitals were filling up and most people in the poor areas do not have access to health insurance so where would they go in the event of large numbers becoming infected? On top of all of this we were getting mixed signals from political leaders. Federal government dismissed the virus as nothing more than a cold whereas on the other hand local government followed WHO directives and shut down everything but the essential services.

In our community in Caca and Pesca, situated on the sea front in Fortaleza we began to realise that the spread of the virus in the poor areas and favelas wasn't really materialising but that the economic consequences of shutdown were having a huge effect. As restrictions were enforced businesses began to close down, people lost their jobs and those who worked in the informal market were left unprotected. Lots of people down our way worked in bars and restaurants and all closed for at least four months. In the favelas




Fr Tadhg and volunteers delivering food parcels.

we very soon became aware of the economic hardship of thousands of people and that big numbers didn't even have enough food to put on the table each day. It was then that we began to organise the collection and the distribution of food parcels. People were very generous in their response. Over the first four months almost 2,000 food parcels were delivered in the communities where the Redemptorists live and work in the poor areas on the Praia do Futuro.

So what has it been like living with COVID-19? Some people close to me lost their lives with complications

between COVID and other underlying health issues. People suffered in not being able to have a proper funeral for their loved ones and we felt it in not being able to be with them in their pain. To date there have been almost 160,000 deaths as a result of COVID related sickness. Some scenes of mass graves have caused huge upset to all of us. The economic difficulties caused by shut down has caused hardship for hundreds of thousands of families. Over the past number of months many people who would normally be with us in helping others found themselves in big economic

difficulties and in need of help.

But to finish on a positive note. The solidarity and the reaching out shown by people over the past few months has been very uplifting. In their own hardship and difficulties, people were extremely sensitive to the needs of others who were less well off. People showed a great community spirit and it brought many people together in a common cause. It was certainly the gospel of Jesus in action and a positive response to the constant plea of Pope Francis for the church to go out to the outskirts of life and to take comfort and hope to the poor. 

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

If you would like to support the ongoing ministries of the Redemptorists in Ireland and overseas we ask you to donate to us in the following ways.

### BANK TRANSFER:

Bank Name and Address: **AIB, 9 Terenure Road East, Rathgar, Dublin 6.**  
 Bank A/C Name: **Redemptorists No. 1 account**  
 IBAN: **IE95 AIBK 9310 7135 7110 76**  
 BIC Code: **AIBKIE2D**  
 Sort code: **931071**  
 A/C Number: **35711076**

### BY CHEQUE (MADE PAYABLE TO THE REDEMPTORISTS):

Postal Address: **Fr Dan Baragry CSSR**  
**Provincial Offices**  
**St Joseph's Monastery**  
**At Alphonsus Road**  
**Dundalk, County Louth**  
**A91 F3FC**


## INTRODUCING...

I am Dermot Kelly, from Portadown, Co. Armagh. I am blessed with a wonderful family; the seeds of a deep love of God and Catholic faith were planted early in my life. I am a father to three beautiful daughters; Ava (7), Grace (4) and Baby Rosa (9 months). I am husband to an amazing wife, Aine. I have been a youth minister for the last 10 years.

I graduated in leisure, events and hospitality management from the University of Ulster and I've spent time in my early life working for Walt Disney World and the Hilton Hotel Group.

I began my ministry life with a gentle call from God through a friend and young curate in my parish, to help out for a few hours each week to journey with younger people. I never turned back and this was supported with the invitation in formation with Redemptorist Youth Ministries Studies Programme.

Since then I have spent nine incredible years as the Youth Director of the Archdiocese of Armagh.

These last few years for me have been the most challenging yet reward and I know God has been working through me as I felt a strong call to the Redemptorists once again. 



In March, at the beginning of lockdown, Fr Noel Kehoe CSSR, Rector of St Joseph's Redemptorist community in Dundalk adapted the Novena prayer in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. The prayer has been used worldwide and provides great comfort to many during these difficult times.

## Adapted Novena Prayer

Mother of Perpetual Help,  
with the greatest confidence  
we come before your holy picture  
to beseech your intercession.

We think of you, Mother,  
at the foot of the cross.  
Your heart must have bled  
to see your Son in agony.  
But your joy was great  
when he rose from the dead,  
victorious over the powers of evil.

Mother of Sorrows,  
pray for us in this time of trial.  
Help us not to lose heart.

Intercede for your people who are afflicted with Coronavirus.  
Comfort your people who are vulnerable and anxious.  
Protect healthcare workers who put their lives at risk.  
Inspire our leaders to make good decisions.  
Change our hearts that all may act responsibly.

Teach us to trust in God's love and mercy.  
And so share with you  
the joy of having courageously  
faced up to all the challenges of life.  
Amen.



# 60 YEARS A GROWING

In 1960, the Irish Redemptorists initiated the mission, which gave the foundation to today's Vice-province of Fortaleza. By Fr Brendan McConvery CSSR



## Fortaleza 1982

*Back Row: left to right*

Frs Paul Turley, Joe McLaughlin, Albert McGettrick, Leonard Martin, Paddy Harkin, Tom Reynolds, Patsy Kelly and Martin Murray.

*Third Row: left to right*

Frs Alan Glynn, Dick Rooney, Steve McCabe, Ciaran O'Callaghan, Brendan McDonald, Pat Lavery and Eamon Gowing.

*Second Row: left to right*

Frs Jack Duggan, Brian O'Sullivan, Jose Rodrigues, Pat O'Sullivan, Brian Holmes, Tony Brannigan, John Kieling, Fergus Corry, Bendan Callanan and Br Pascal Doherty.

*First Row: left to right*

Paddy Donnelly, Ger Cahir, Seán Lawlor, Richard Delahunty, Dan Bray, Patsy Myers, Phil Hearty and PJ Clear

When Fr Michael Curran was confirmed as provincial superior of the Irish Redemptorists for a third term of three years in September 1959; Fr William Gaudreau, the superior general, added a few words to his letter of appointment. "After much pressure from the Holy See and from the bishops of South America; I am knocking on your door to ask the Irish Province to take over a mission area there, specifically in the state of Goiás; Brazil; in the diocese of Porto Nacional."

The Irish Redemptorists already had two missions in the Philippines and India, but a bumper crop of vocations in the 1950s made it a place to which a superior might turn in time of need. Although twice the size of Ireland, the diocese of Porto Nacional had only seven or eight priests at its disposal. Four Irish Redemptorists left for Brazil the following April. Only Fr James Collins, the superior, had missionary experience of several years in the Philippines. Frs James McGrath, Michael Kirwan and John Meyers were comparatively recently ordained.


A second house was established in Fortaleza, the largest city of North East Brazil, by 1962. The intention was to build a college that would serve

for the secondary education of local vocations. It eventually became the headquarters of the Irish Redemptorist Vice-Province of Fortaleza. The vast territory within the remit of the Redemptorists proved capable of absorbing as many men as could be spared from Ireland. By the end of its first seven years in 1967, the Brazil mission numbered five houses and 26 members, and Fr Collins, Don Jaime, was ordained bishop of Miracema do Norte in 1967. Today there are about 600 Redemptorists in Brazil, in five provinces.

What neither Frs Gaudreau, Curran or the first pioneers in Brazil could suspect was how radically Brazil was to change within the next few years. The Second Vatican Council released a new energy of the Spirit on the South American churches. The opening paragraph of the Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, stressed that the church shared in "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of people of our time". To become open to those hopes and griefs was to become open a world torn by poverty yet striving for justice.

Dom Helder Camara, who is believed to have drafted the appeal of the

Brazilian bishops to the Redemptorist general that resulted in the coming of the Irish to Brazil, was radical in his commitment to helping the Brazilian church become a truly 'servant church', the church of the poor. In the years following the Council, prophetic voices in the Brazilian churches were becoming clearer and more insistent. The Irish Redemptorists of Fortaleza began to listen and to identify with the truth of what they were saying. They were also communicating that message back in Ireland. Fr. Jim McGrath attended the Irish provincial chapter and was unexpectedly elected provincial. It was a time of intense change in the Irish Church, but Jim McGrath and Redemptorists on holiday from Brazil both helping on novenas and missions, helped them to see how much of the Brazilian experience was comparable to that of Ireland, especially as it became aware of its own need to be open to its own "joys and hope, 'griefs and anguish'".

To all who served in Brazil and who are still happily among us, we say thanks for your generous service, and we pray that those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith may receive the reward of their labours. 

# MOZAMBIQUE AND THE PANDEMIC

With a depleted community and a lack of medical resources, facing COVID-19 was daunting.

By Fr Brian Holmes CSSR



First there was the shock. Two confrères, John Bermingham and Eridian from Brazil, with flights booked to return to the Mission in March, have their flights cancelled. COVID-19 has hit South Africa badly. The experts foresee a calamity in all African countries. If what happened in Europe happens here, there is no hope for the poor, with health-care structures so precarious or non-existent. Like everybody here, I feared for the worst. This may be the end of the road for many of us here in Furancungo where there is no hospital, only a very limited health-care station. I began thinking of St Alphonsus' book, Preparation for Death... But at the same time remembered Peter's prayer on Tabor, "Lord it is good for us to be here," no matter what happens. It became my daily invocation, it is good for the Redemptorist Mission to be here close to our people, come what may, it is good to be here.

Schools and churches closed, all gatherings forbidden, masks to be worn, hands to be washed, and social distancing of 1.5meter observed. We quietly gathered our sisters and lay co-workers to reflect and work out a day to day emergency plan, what should we do, what may we, what can we do in this uncertain reality when we cannot go out to the people in their communities and gather with them to celebrate and study and carry the mission forward?

We have a local community radio, so we arranged straight away to have our Sunday Eucharist broadcast at 8 o'clock every Sunday morning. So for the first few months this was a life-line of communication with our 80 rural communities and seven more in the town of Furancungo. And at the end of the Mass there was time for communications, words of encouragement and hope to our Christian Communities. During Holy Week I asked the Bishop to authorise community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation over the radio, which he gladly did. And we translated St Alphonsus' prayer of Spiritual Communion to Chichewa and prayed it at communion time.

During the rest of the week, since we could not continue our regular visits to the rural communities what could we do. There were practical things that we should have done down the years, but we had sacrificed them, willingly, to give priority to the Mission. So now we had a chance to catch up on these tasks. Here in Furancungo, the parish centre, we have gatherings of up to 300 people during the year, but very little infra structure to support these meetings. So with financial help from the Dublin Redemptorist Province, topped up by friends and families in Ireland, plus a generous help from the Irish embassy in Maputo, we were able to build

proper toilets for men and women, a community kitchen, and a protective wall around the Mission station. I noticed also that in our Parish pump, which is open to all the neighbours, there is a regular spillage of water, which we were able to channel into a newly built fish tank. A neighbour gave us 33 little fish which are fattening up, and in the month of November we hope to get 500 more fry, from a government scheme to distribute fry to families and communities interested. So our protein levels will rise we hope.

Meanwhile we kept a close eye on the COVID-19 scene. Strangely it has not developed here as it did in Europe, America and Brazil. Today 8 months after arriving, in a country of 33 million inhabitants, there are 11,000 cases notified, of these 9,000 have recovered, and 79 have died of the disease. I see that today Ireland has 53,400 cases with 1,868 deaths, with a much smaller population. Nobody can explain this. I often think that the good Lord has looked with love and compassion on the poverty of His children here in Mozambique, and spared them this plague.

In August the government began to open up slowly. Initially we were allowed to gather up to 50 people in our celebrations, later this was expanded to 150. Celebrations should not be longer than an hour. Individual confession, no, so once again the Bishop authorised Community Celebration. To protect us from contaminating one another, even though the COVID-19 does not seem to have arrived in our corner of the country hidden away in almost inaccessible mountains, we decided that all our celebrations will be in the open air, and masks should be worn, hands washed with soap, and distance from one another maintained. Not all obey! The celebrant must wear a visor.

We were able to visit all the 12 pastoral zones in the parish during August and September, and here in the town we have two Masses on Sunday morning, in the open air, one at 6am and the other at 8am. And now we have started a second round of visits, with two days in each zone of celebration and a formation program for community leaders, catechists, counsellors, youth leaders.

And now the good news. Fr Eridian arrived in Maputo on October 30. And young Redemptorist deacon, Isaias is awaiting his visa to join the mission. We miss Fr John, who was here from the beginning, and will take on a new mission, but we thank the Lord for his time and dedication here. With the arrival of two confreres, the pressure will be off me. I would love a break, but a break with lock-down in Ireland or Brazil is not very enticing. I know in my heart that I am better off here in the backwoods of Mozambique than anywhere in the world.



Fr Brian celebrates Mass for radio listeners



Blessing a marriage, COVID style



Open air celebration in Dambolalikulu.



First Mass after a six month lockdown



The newly built kitchen

# ALL IS HUNKY DORY IN LUXEMBOURG!

Fr Michael with Helen and Lucy Keveaney Clarke and Aibhistin Cummins.



Happiness is a bag of Hunky Dorys!


St Alphonsus Church, Luxembourg



Back in June of 1982, as a 17 year old Redemptorist student, being welcomed by Fr Tony Mulvey to a summer holiday job in the Holiday Inn, Luxembourg, I could never have imagined that I would one day return to live and work in this beautiful country. That is exactly where I have landed now as a member of the Redemptorist Community at the Eglise Saint Alphonse, and I am part of the Parish team of the 'parish of Lëtzebuerg Notre-Dame'. The Redemptorist community is an international community in its membership and is located in the heart of this bustling city. The recently renovated monastery which was built in 1864 is a great place to live and provides great

ministry space for the work of the parish. The Church of Saint Alphonse was built in 1856 and is about to be restored by the historical and heritage authority of the government. This will have obvious consequences for those who worship here and will mean that we will have to go in search of a new home for the English speaking community that I serve.

While Catholicism continues to be the dominant religion, church practice in Luxembourg, like so many other parts of Europe, is in great decline and the one exception would seem to be this thriving English speaking community who are a real joy to minister to. People come from all over the country to attend

the church services and in these COVID times many more join in on the Facebook broadcast every Sunday at 11.30am. The ministries of the church include all preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Marriage and all this is carried out by lay volunteers. Music ministry, youth work and social outreach are other active ministries that present a living, engaged and committed Christian community in the heart of a beautiful capital city. All that was missing for me was a supply of Hunky Dory crisps which thanks to my great friends Aidan, Muriel and Gemmisha were in the post even before I left home! Please keep us all in your prayers. 



## GONE TO GOD



### FR JAMES DUGGAN CSsR

James (known as Jaco in Brazil) was born into a farming family in the Parish of Grenagh near Blarney, County Cork. At a young age he went to live with his Aunt in the Waterloo Inn on the banks of the Blackwater river. He got his Secondary School education in the North Mon School in Cork city. In 1954 having completed his novitiate in Esker he was professed. In 1960 having completed his studies in Cluain Mhuire he was ordained and in 1962 he travelled to Brazil to begin his missionary work.

During his many years in Brazil he was involved in many different ministries – ranging from Parish work to making Bible reading accessible to ordinary people. In the 1970.s he was Secretary to the Bishops Conference of the North East of Brazil and also hugely involved in the Cursilho movement. In 1978 he and another confrere went to live in a small house among the poorer people in the periphery of Fortaleza. The promotion of Basic Christian Communities and justice for the poor were close to his heart. These values would have been central for him during all his missionary life in Brazil.

In the Vice-Province James had many different roles at different times. He was Rector and Director of Formation. He was also Director of the Regional Seminary in Fortaleza for a time.

James was always a very committed and loyal Redemptorist. His intelligent analysis of Brazilian Church, political and cultural changes was greatly admired and appreciated. His presence in the vice-province was always significant and also greatly appreciated in recent years by the young Brazilians that have joined us.

In recent years his health deteriorated and he was unable to continue the work he loved so much. After a short time in hospital in Fortaleza the Lord called him home. James was a good and faithful Redemptorist servant and will be missed by many here in Ireland and Brazil. May he rest in peace.



### FR MATT RYAN CSsR

Matt, a native of Cooleen, Templedeery, County Tipperary, was born into a big family. One of his brothers, Martin, also became a Redemptorist and worked for many years in the Philippine Islands. Having studied in St Clement's College, Limerick, he joined the Redemptorists in Cluain Mhuire, Galway, for his philosophy course. He did his novitiate in Dundalk and then went to Marianella, Dublin for his theology studies.

After Ordination Matt was appointed to the Redemptorist Vice-Province in the north-east of Brazil. His mission work there was varied and provided scope for his many gifts and his deep human compassion. He worked in the parish ministry and on parish missions. Always very dedicated, hardworking, and authentic, he related very warmly to the people and especially to anyone in trouble. He had a special place in his heart for the poor people and always disliked seeing food being wasted.

During his years in Brazil, Matt also was involved in many roles in the administration of the Vice-Province. He was vice-provincial, rector and director of formation at different times.

Matt always cherished his family, his home County of Tipperary and the local farming world. While home on holidays, he spent his time on the farm in Cooleen.

Above all, Matt liked to be near the people with their problems and challenges. He was a big hearted, generous missionary who devoted his life to the Brazilian people and to God.

Matt enjoyed good health most of his life which permitted him to be always very active and "on the go". In later years he struggled with his health. After a relatively short enough spell in hospital in Fortaleza, the Lord called him home to heaven.

He is greatly missed by his family, by his Redemptorist confreres and by the many people whose lives he touched in Brazil. May he rest in peace.

