



Laudate



Franciscan Brothers' Newsletter

Christmas 2017

Message from the Minister General

I'm privileged, at this beautiful time of year, to have Laudate convey greetings of love, gratitude, joy and peace to each of our Brothers in Ireland, California and East Africa, to our families, friends and to the agencies and individuals who support us through their prayers or by providing technical, financial and moral support for our work in Ireland, California and East Africa. For this I am most grateful to Peter Roddy for taking on the onerous task of editing and publishing Laudate.

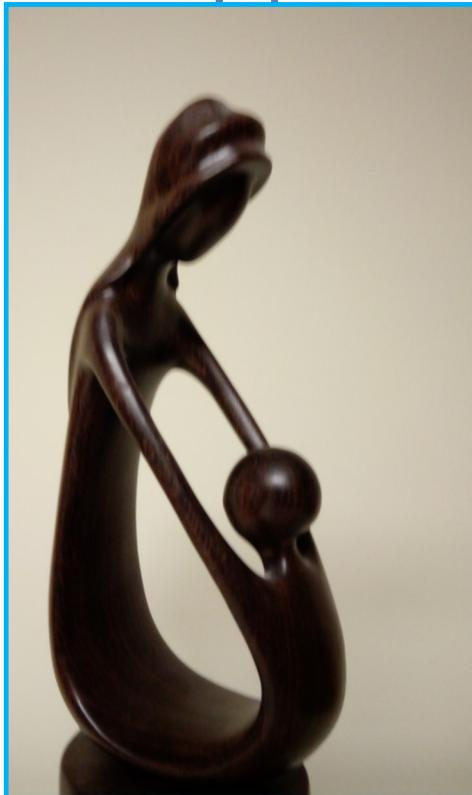
It feels strange addressing a wider audience than usual in my new role as Minister General but I'm happy on behalf of all our Brothers to use the opportunity to send our gratitude and best wishes to all of you and to wish each one a blessed Christmas and every good in 2018.

As we come close to celebrating the bicentennial of the foundation of the Franciscan Brothers in 1820 we reflect deeply on the future of our Institute. We are immensely proud of the contribution of our Brothers to the people and communities where they served in Ireland, USA, Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, Newfoundland, Kenya and Uganda. We carry the legacy of their wonderful lives and achievements. But like all good families we must also carry the pathologies of a small number of our predecessors with equal dignity.

We know our ministries in Ireland and California will cease with this generation of Brothers but despite our age profile we continue to do great work. Hilarion, Tom, Denis and Michael continue with their wonderful contribution to the Church in California. In Ireland we continue to witness to the love of God by our presence and work among the people and communities of Clifden, Currandulla, Mountbellew, Clara and Dublin. The kind word and listening ear is often much more effective in bringing peace to people than a lecture or homily to a big audience.

Boniface Kyalo in his new book 'An Experience of Religious Life in the 21st Century' raises interesting challenges for

African Religious. Using agricultural terminology he equates Religious life to a 'scion' and the local culture to a 'root stock'. Have we been promoting a 'Western style' religious life scion that will never take in the root stock of local culture? The answer to this question will have to come from the Africans themselves. Our 2015 and 2017 General Chapters puts the responsibility for the future of our Institute on the shoulders of our African Brothers.



Having spent eight days recently in South Sudan and having worked closely with refugees from that beautiful country and with the people of Northern Uganda I'm convinced that our charism, vision and mission are what is needed in the present moment. This conviction is reinforced by the call and example of Pope Francis and the direction of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals given by the UN on behalf humanity. How our new members are formed and the example and lives of our professed brothers will ensure that the scion is a healthy, vigorous one that will thrive in the variety of root stocks in what is a rapidly changing African Society.

Volunteers Sarah Oates and Brigid Ryan continue to make big contributions to our mission. We congratulate Sarah on her graduation with an honours Master's Degree in International Development from Maynooth University (Kimmage Campus). Brigid continues her wonderful work of empowering some of the most neglected men and women in the world by capacity and capability building them for independent sustainable living through Adraa Agriculture College.

We are also privileged to have two young, talented volunteers for six weeks in Adraa - Martin Mulkerriens from Moycullen, Co. Galway and Eilish Owens from Co. Tyrone.

We still miss Fr. Gerry Foley who did trojan work for the three years he was with us in Uganda. While we wish him well in Kimmage Manor and we would love to have him back in Adraa.

Continued on back

Message from South Sudan

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan on 9th July 2011 as the outcome of a 2005 agreement that ended Africa's longest-running civil war. Made up of the 10 southern-most states of Sudan, South Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in Africa. It is home to over 60 different major ethnic groups, and the majority of its people follow traditional religions. Independence did not bring conflict in South Sudan to an end. The 2013-2015 civil war displaced 2.2 million people and threatened the success of one of the world's newest countries. Warring sides signed a peace deal to end the civil war but the conflict continues. Following is an excerpt from Br. Tony Dolan's reflections on his recent visit to this war torn country.

Greetings from Yambio, South Sudan!

I arrived here on Tuesday last with Dan Dania and Bernadette Awour staff and board member respectively of Adraa Agriculture College. Initially four of us were supposed to come but one, Johnson Otieno, was not allowed to travel by Uganda Immigration at Arua Airstrip as his entry to Uganda was not stamped on his Kenyan passport. There was more drama at Arua as Dan and Berna were also held up as their visas were for three months and the American pilot was reluctant to allow them travel without a work permit. However, after a number of phone calls and the intervention of Charles Lagu who was in Kampala at the time and Rob Beasley, Country Representative of Caritas Austria in Yambio, all three of us eventually got going.



The aeroplane, a small 12-seater Cessna C2088 with 5 of us on board plus the pilot, because of South Sudan immigration regulations, had to enter the country through Juba, a 50 minute flight from Arua. Despite the picture on landing – only UN and WFP planes to be seen - of a country at war with itself we had no problems with immigration or security at Juba and within an hour we were back in the air on the one and a half hour flight to Yambio. There we were met by our host for the week, Bob Beasley from Dublin.

I am staying with the Christian Brothers and Dan and Berna at the Solidarity Teacher Training College – the only reason we are staying in different places is because neither of the two places had room for the 3 of us. There 6 Christian Brothers in this community – 3 young Kenyans and one each of my vintage from Australia, the US and Ireland (Tipperary). Two teach in the Solidarity Teacher Training College, 2 in the local diocesan secondary school and 2 run a support programme for AIDs/HIV people and Orphans. Living conditions are frugal but adequate.

Solidarity South Sudan is a programme of a number to Religious Congregations who came together after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought a temporary peace to

South Sudan. It is an effort to share personnel to help what is a very underdeveloped country that has been in civil war for 48 of the 61 years since it got independence from Britain in 1956. The Solidarity focus is on two areas – primary school teacher training and the training of nurses. It is estimated that South Sudan needs another 10,000 teachers to ensure all its children have access to primary education.

Solidarity established two Teacher Training Colleges, one in Yambio and the other in Malakal, which is close the border with the Republic of Sudan. Unfortunately the Malakal TTC had to be closed because of the December 2013 outbreak of civil war. The Yambio TTC and the Nursing School in Wau have managed to keep going in the midst of the turmoil created by power hungry, corrupt, self-centred so called liberators. The perseverance of Solidarity is due to the love, dedication and commitment of highly qualified professionals from many different countries and different religious congregations.



Why are we in South Sudan?

Uganda is hosting over 1,000,000 refugees from South Sudan and most of these are in West Nile, which is in the catchment area of Adraa Agriculture College (AAC). In the past year AAC has provided six week training courses in different aspects of farming and non-farming businesses for about 500 South Sudan refugees. Courses have been funded by a number of NGOs including Caritas Austria, Caritas Belgium, Sign of Hope Germany, Misereor Germany, Misesan Cara and Friends of the Franciscan Brothers in Ireland and the USA

Caritas Austria, through AAC Principal, Br. Charles Lagu, requested AAC to send a team to Yambio to look at the situation on the ground and make suggestions on how effective agricultural education and extension may be promoted in the country. Caritas Austria South Sudan Programme is headed by Irishman, Rob Beasley and its technical advisor is Matthias Fettback from Germany, both of whom have visited Adraa. Solidarity has also an interest in promoting agriculture development and has developed a very impressive farm at Riimenze, 32 kms from Yambio town which incorporates local farmer groups. This project is headed by a dynamic Vietnamese nun, Sr. Rosa.

In the past five days we have visited Rimenze and Nzara which is 25 kms in the other direction from Yambio. As the

civil war continues travel is limited and care must be taken when traveling outside of Yambio town. There is a strong presence of the UN and UNICEF in Yambio but regulations keep their personnel confined to their residential quarters. In addition to meeting groups of farmers we have met with a few CBOs, NGOs, civil and religious leaders. Rob and Matthias have been our constant companions, guides and transporters.



Impressions of war weary South Sudan!

This part of South Sudan should be the bread basket of the country and the Region. It has a tropical climate with up to 2000mms of rainfall annually. Soils are fertile and it is rich in biodiversity with wonderful forests of mahogany, teak and many types of fruit. But even in war indigenous forests are been plundered by greedy business people who indiscriminately destroy this natural resource. Outside on the street opposite where I'm writing this there are at least 10 big double trailer covered lorries waiting for to be loaded with mahogany for transport to Europe, USA, China etc. via the Democratic Republic of Congo to Kampala, Mombasa or Dar Salaam. Local people benefit little from this wonderful resource.

Roads are non-existent in many parts and the few existing are of murrum but full of potholes. The only tarmac road in South Sudan is the approximately 100 kms one from Nimule on the Uganda boarder to Juba, the capital. This is a vast country, 619,745 sqkm in area (8 times the size of the Island of Ireland) richly endowed with natural resources. It has a relatively small population of an estimated 14 million people.

Colonisers, the British initially and subsequent the Arab North, did little by way of education or infrastructure development. The resulting major issue facing South Sudan are the low levels of capacities and capabilities of its human capital.

Our work here

We have had the privilege of meeting wonderful people, South Sudanese, missionaries and NGO staff in the past five days. We are also impressed by the work and commitment of the Catholic Church – the main institution that supports the people through the years of turmoil. We also got good insight into what might have been were if not for the War Lords. We visited an industrial complex in Nzara, developed by the British in

the late 1940s early 1950s that produced the best quality garments in the world from locally produced cotton. It employed 3,500 people but has been lying derelict since 1989.

We witnessed the achievements of Solidarity in Riimenze which with the technical support of Mathias Fettback, has developed a beautiful farm producing a wide variety of crops from coffee to pineapples and empowering local farmers through a group approach.

We saw first-hand the passion and commitment of local people who, through the vision and leadership of James Mabu, have established a Community Organisation for Development (COD), promoting sustainable agriculture in a wide area of Nzara County.

We visited an Agriculture and Technology College which could comfortably accommodated 500 farmers or students. It was constructed with USA funds by Catholic Relief Service (CRS) in the 1990s but it has never been used.

The dedication and commitment of missionaries and NGO staff is inspirational. Rob Beasley, a young man in his mid-thirties, has dedicated the last six years of life working with the people of South Sudan in one of the most dangerous places in the world. He is prepared to continue that commitment as head of Caritas Austria South Sudan Programme. We are proud of the silent contribution and witness that many Irish people, Lay, Sisters, Brothers, and Priests, working from faith or humanitarian based value systems striving to bring a neglected section of humanity on to the first rung of the development ladder

Above all we experienced the resilience of a people who have gone through so much pain and suffering but still have hope for a better future for themselves and their children.



In the next few days will put a report together that we hope will

contribute in helping Local People, Caritas Austrian South Sudan Programme and Adraa Agriculture College charter the way forward in the promotion of sustainable agriculture as a strategy for the alleviation of poverty, restoring peace and creating an environment in which all in South Sudan can achieve decent livelihoods.

Tony Dolan 5 November, 2017

A VISIT TO THE USA

Gerald Smith reflects on his and Bernard Kariuki's visit to the USA in October. They were guests of the Br. Leonard Conway and the Brooklyn Brothers on the East Coast and our own Franciscan Brothers in California on the West Coast.

THE JOURNEY THERE

Looking at the position of Nairobi on a map of the world one would think that the shortest way by air to New York would be to fly westwards across the continent of Africa and onwards across the Atlantic ocean to the Big Apple with a flying time of 10 or 12 hours! Not so!

The journey took Br Bernard Kariuki and I north east to Dubai and then over Northern Europe, over Norway and Sweden, Iceland eventually turning southward to Canada and into New York.

From the time that we started our journey at the Brothers house on 23 Silanga Close, Nairobi to our final destination at St. Francis 'Prep School on 16000 Lewis Boulevard NY took almost 30 hours which included lay overs!

The two intrepid travelers left Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) at 10.45pm on Tuesday



Gerald and Bernard with their host Br. Leonard Conway at St. Francis Prep.

September 26th and arrived at JFK at 2:15 on September 27th 2017 having becoming younger in the process!

We were headed to New York to help Br Leonard Conway celebrate his Golden Jubilee as a Brooklyn Franciscan Brother and to attend the Cavan Association golf tournament in

memory of Pat Cahill who fundraised for our mission in East Africa for many years and then to travel westwards to Los Angeles to visit our Brothers there.

Upon arrival at JFK airport we were met by the Golden jubilarian himself, Br Lenny, who is President of St Francis Preparatory High School and Mr. Michael Graziano, our chauffeur, and who works in the Development Office at the school.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

From September 27th to Friday, October 13th when we departed to Los Angeles we were guests of Br Lenny who was a wonderful host, tour guide and chauffeur! For the next 15 days or so we were feted in style and treated with great hospitality in many of the Brooklyn Brothers communities and institutions that they run: St Francis Prep (the largest Catholic High School in the country) St Anthony's High school, St Francis College, Our Lady of the Angels Friary and Camp Alvernia at Centerport.

During those wonderful days we participated in a Walk-A-



With Patrick McLaughlin, Principal of St. Francis Prep.

Thon, a day for Religious Brothers at St John's University, a nine hour tour of New York City and a similar one in Washington DC where we toured the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy

Land, the National Shrine and Cathedral of Immaculate Conception We enjoyed very much our visits with Br James OSF and meeting with the youth that he ministers to. It was a joy to see such positive young people.

Other highlights (among many) include the wonderful occasion of the Franciscan Brothers Jubilee celebrations at Immaculate Conception Center, Douglaston, NY; the Feast of St Francis liturgy at Francis Prep and dinner with the community; a visit with my niece Charlotte and her family at Franklin Square; and after the 9 hour tour of New York City, dinner at Emmet O'Lunnays Irish pub, Manhattan hosted by Dan Duffy a good friend of Br Lenny. Mr Patrick McLaughlin the principal of St Francis Prep also graced the occasion.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Apart from the generous invitation of Br Lenny to attend his Golden Jubilee celebration, another reason that Br. Bernard and I were in New York was to attend the Cavan Association's annual Pat Cahill Memorial Golf tournament. This tournament is a charity event in aid of our missionary work in East Africa. It was established in 1986 by the past President, Mr. Patrick Cahill, (RIP) who ran it until two years before his death in 2010. To date the fundraiser has donated

over \$140,000. Br Clement Brady represented the Brothers at this event for almost 30 years! We are deeply grateful to Connie Smith and Michael Reilly Chairmen and to the members of the Association for their dedication and commitment to our mission.

Unfortunately the golf outing failed to take off on October 9th due to heavy rain that left the course unplayable. However all was not lost! A very nice gathering of the members of Cavan Association and many of the Cavan Smiths took place that evening at Rory Dolan's restaurant and bar in the Bronx. Br Bernard read a letter of appreciation to the Association from Br Tony Dolan Minister General of the Franciscan Brothers. Gifts were exchanged . An enjoyable night was had by all!



A visit to St. Paul High School where Gerald spent his first year teaching. St Paul High School in Santa Fe Springs, was the first mission of the Brothers in California. In 2008 the school unveiled a statue of St. Paul in memory of the many Brothers who taught there over the past sixty years. The base of the statue carries the names of all the Brothers who taught at the school over the years. We have had an unbroken link with the school since its beginnings in 1956 and are still well represented there by Br. Denis O'Sullivan, who has been a staff member since the 1980s.

Our fifteen day trip to New York was most enjoyable. We thank Br Lenny and the Franciscan Brothers Brooklyn for their generosity and warmth of their hospitality. It was an unforgettable and memorable experience.

CALIFORNIA

Those same adjectives can also be ascribed to our Brothers in California among whom we found ourselves for a week at the invitation and generosity of Br Hilarion O'Connor Regional Minister who picked us up at LAX.

We enjoyed sumptuous meals and camaraderie with Brs Hilarion and Tom in their Gainsborough home. Both are great cooks and hosts. An overnighter with Michael Gormely and Denis O'Sullivan in La Habra was also a very pleasant experience . Br Michael was our driver. We visited Loyola University, St Paul's High School, St Bernard's High School. Br Tom did the honors for our overnight visit to Jannetwood in Oxnard and our visit to St Bonaventure High School, Ventura and of course "the must" walk on the beach!



Br. Denis O'Sullivan

Another "must" was a tour of Our Lady of the Angels cathe-



Dinner at Gainsborough: from left—Bernard, Michael Gormley, Tom Fahy, Gerald and Hilarion O'Connor

dral. Br Hilarion took a day off to give us a tour of that magnificent beautiful building. It is testimony to his hard work who saw it grow from its foundations to the height of LA skies!

For me it was a nostalgic trip having spent 14 years in California: three at Loyola university; one at St Paul's High School, Santa Fe Springs; two at St Bernard's Playa del Rey and eight at St Bonaventure High School, Ventura. During our week in California I was fortunate to be able visit all those places again courtesy of Br Tom Fahy and Michael Gormley. After being 37 years away from California all had changed and me too! I could identify with very little of those places where I lived and worked! All had utterly changed! It was almost like visiting them for the first time!

For me many things have changed in the intervening 37 years but there is one thing that has not changed and that is the Franciscan hospitality, warmth, and generosity of our cousins the Brooklyn Brothers and our confreres in California.

To all who made our trip possible Bernard and I are deeply grateful for such a memorable visit

Thank you and may the good Lord bless you!

Happy Christmas to all!

Pax et Bonum.

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Joe McMonagle RIP

We were shocked and saddened on Sunday October 8th with the news of the untimely death of our colleague and friend, Joe McMonagle who died suddenly participating in his favority pastime, sheep dog trials in Mayo.

Joe taught in Mountbellew Agricultural College for forty years (1973 -2013). He was a hardworking, excellent teacher who always had a wonderful interest in his students and kept track of them after they left the college. He devoted



Joe with Vincent Flynn at Murchison Falls during their visit to Uganda in 2012

much time outside his regular working hours supporting student involvement in sport and in other social and educational activities.

Joe always had a keen interest in the work of the Franciscan Brothers in East Africa and in March 2012 he and his colleague Vincent Flynn visited us in Uganda and Kenya. During this visit they officially opened the Adraa Bee Development Centre that was funded by Mountbellew Agricultural College past students.

Joe was laid to rest in his beloved Donegal following his funeral Mass in St. Colmcille's Church, Glendown on Thursday October 12th.

Our sincere sympathy goes Joe's wife Kathleen, his daughters Niamh, Karen, Irene, his son Shane, his brothers and sisters and the extended family.

ar dheis de go raibh a anam uasal

Some highlights from the Lare Community Diary from the pen of by Br. Baptist Sugrue



Last year ended for Lare with a very welcome visit by our brothers Sean Conway & Joe Beirne from Ireland. We had Christmas in Baraka to which all Kenyan based brothers were invited. It was a splendid occasion of joy & happiness

On Jan. 11th. the Br Larry Timmons golf tournament (in its 19th year) held in Njoro. It had the usual fine turnout & a very enjoyable bowls competition for schoolchildren.

Jan 24th The Irish Ambassador to Kenya, Vincent O'Neill & his wife, Bronagh paid us a courtesy call & partook of an estimable lunch. There was a 70th birthday party for Baptist at the Das Digital Hotel in Nakuru on the 27th. Between Brothers & St

Francis' staff members 30 attended & pronounced it a marvellous night.

On Feb.13th. at a board meeting of St. Francis' secondary School there was the official handing over of principalship from Philip Wanjohi to John Njoroge. It was a smooth transition & things are proceeding like clockwork since, thank God. (*Philip Wanjohi was earlier elected to the County Assembly, Lare Ward—with a campaign promise to support local education—we extend our congratulations and good wishes to him and his family*)

On the 17th there was a visit from Trevor Langston & his daughter Alice from England. He's a former principal of Oaks Academy, Cheshire & has been instrumental in partnering St. Francis' with the British education system, which is culturally & financially to the benefit of St. Francis

Mar. 13th saw the installation of the internet at the brothers' house, Galilee, the Parochial House, St Francis' & MCM. It works fairly well except when there is no electricity or a lack of signal.

On St Patricks Day there was a lavish lunch party at the Irish Ambassador's residence in Nairobi. A few of us rubbed shoulders with the higher echelons of society from Kampala, Dublin, Dodoma & Nairobi.

On the 31st. all clergy & religious of the Diocese were invited to St. Mary's Nakuru by the Bishop Muhatia. Br. Alex was elected Secretary of the Religious Men's Association of Nakuru Diocese.

On May 26th a number of the Brothers were present for the opening of Adraa Agriculture College, Uganda. A most enjoyable part of the occasion was sharing a pint of Nile Special with the Irish Ambassador to Uganda, Donal O Cronin, a native of Kilgarvan, Co. Kerry & he can do a fine impersonation of the late Jackie Healy Rae.

The same day Br. Pius Muasa (right) graduated with a Masters Degree in Counselling Psychology at Tangaza College. A Mass of Thanksgiving for Pius' success was celebrated on June 10th at Galilee Community (Lare)



On June 11th two of Peter Mokaya's students had a huge success at the Science Congress in Mombasa. The title of the project was " Energy from Plants" & it will represent Kenya in South Africa in 2018.

The 24th saw five dental experts from Brooklyn, NY arrive for a week. They were led by Dr. Joe Pantaleo & many children & adults from the area benefitted greatly from their expertise.

The 2nd of Sept. there was the reception of Postulants and the profession of Novices. Dominic & Lucas left Lare for Baraka. Alex left Lare on 15th for Adraa & Matthew Nychoti joined Lare Community as Bursar a day later.

On Oct 4th - St Francis' Day Mass for all students at St. Francis' at which several Baptisms were performed. On the 8th. Mass was celebrated in Lare Parish Church which included many Confirmations & three Weddings. On 15th Baptist returned from Ireland.

On 18th Felix Tushemerirwe, Felix Waswa, Lucas, Matthew Nychoti, Dominic, Baptist and four Novices went to Bungoma for the final profession of two Poor Clares Sisters and to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of a third.

The 27th November will see the opening of the new house in Baraka. A glorious celebration is anticipated le cunamh De, with the Bishop & General Council in attendance.

"Let none presume to tell me that the pen is preferable to the sword"!

Le gach dea-ghui i gcoir na Nollag & siochan chuig an domhan le haghaidh ne h Aith bliana.

Stories by the Fireside

A poem by Br. Seamus O'Callaghan

We sat around the fire
When the neighbours rambled in
And listened to the stories
They related 'bout our kin:
The many tales of famine days
When our grandsires died in pain
From starvation on the ridges—
Their tracks today remain



The glimmer of the tilly lamp
Threw shadows on the wall.
I could see an old, old woman
On her knees to heaven call.
With her bare hands, she scratched the ground
A morsel for to find,
But all she got was putrid starch
The blight had left behind
I saw a man, a skeleton,
Thrown out of his abode,
He couldn't pay the rent, and so
He had to walk the road.
He wife and children followed him,
I heard their mournful cry,



Their shrieks call up to heaven
As they bid their home goodbye

I see a rebel coming
With a flame in either hand
To torch the landlord's mansion
And the crops upon his land.
The shots ring out at midnight
From the sentry by the door -

Too late - the house is gutted
And the rebel seen no more

His horse has brought him through the woods
And takes him o'er the hills,
He lives to fight another day
To cure his country's ills.
I see a ship that's anchored
To take the corn away
While peasants die in hundreds
From starvation every day.

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Such stories heard when one is young

Forever to abide -

The stories told in simi-darkness

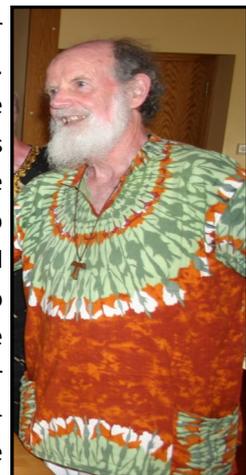
By the fireside

Bits and Pieces

Br. Brian Johnson

Greetings of peace and love to all. Wishing you the Joys and Blessings of Christmas and all that is good in the New Year.

I continue my life in my little cottage, "An Bealach". I am indeed blessed, and I thank God and our Congregation that I am afforded the opportunity and place to spend time in prayer and solitude. It is wonderful to be able to mix the active life with the contemplative, a topic that Pope Francis alludes to regularly. The role of silence and quiet for prayer in our lives can not be emphasised enough. As St Augustine says "Silence is the language of God". Silence reveals God to us in a way that nothing else can. Prayer and silence helps us to see the deeper significance of all that we do. With prayer we begin to sense from within the life we are called to live. This type of prayer opens the inner eye. It was in contemplation that Francis received the



sacred marks of Christ. Thomas Merton tells us that in the centre of our being, is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion and can be reached only by silence...and that it is in silence and contemplation that we touch that point of light even if it is wrapped in "the web of the psyche's weaving." Be still and know!.

Mission Appeal/Awareness

I appreciate this opportunity to be able to thank all of you for your tremendous kindness and generosity in supporting our mission in Kenya and Uganda.

This year brought us to the diocese of Raphoe which incorporates almost all of Co. Donegal. Donegal is one of the hidden treasures of Ireland as many on the Great Atlantic Way have discovered. The scenes, hills and glens are a wonder to behold and another reflection of the gifts from a bountiful God.



The people and priests of Donegal were most welcoming and generous towards us. Every parish I visited afforded me a tremendous welcome. Every parish was different. Several parishes were in the Gaeltacht and I had to brush up on the "cupla focal" and add few new ones. Congregations were most understanding of the "botuns" that I made in my homilies and were most appreciative of my efforts.

Mission Appeals/Awareness is about highlighting the myriad of needs of the undeveloped world. It is about asking for help to enable those in dire poverty to help themselves. It is equally about the need for prayer and the importance of prayer in our work. Prayer is the "glue" that holds it all together. Thank you for the prayers offered each weekend for the success of the appeal. I know many of you offered special prayers – individually and communally, friends and Brothers – for me. There is no doubt that your prayers were heard and the power of the Holy Spirit was evident. I am most grateful.

We wish Bishop Alan McGuckian health and blessings as he assumes the leadership of the diocese of Raphoe and we wish Bishop Philip Boyce many years of peace and blessings in his retirement.

Dairy Goat Scheme

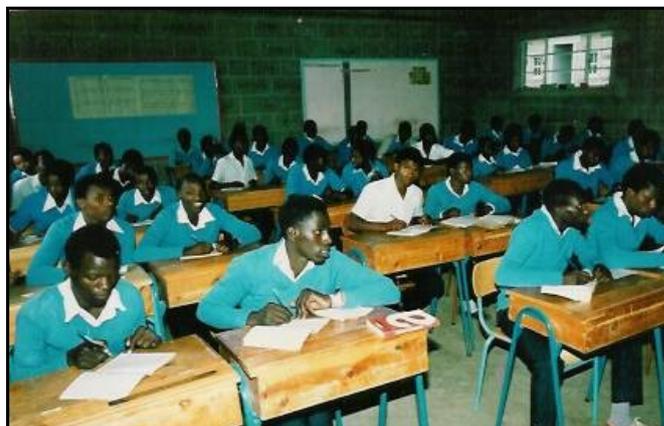
The pedigree dairy goat scheme set up several years ago continues to thrive. The numbers of goats and families that benefit from the scheme continues to increase. This year with the help of a donor we were able to acquire a new buck to enhance the breeding. (The old buck died of exhaustion!) It is a self-perpetuating programme and is monitored and directed by people directly involved in the programme. The leadership of the group have set up training days for those interested in being a part of the programme which is a requirement for receiving a goat. Owners must meet specified standards. Goats and pens are inspected regularly to ensure good milk yield and that goats are kept healthy and productive.

As is the case with so many of our projects we are most grateful to our donors.

St. Francis' Scholarship Programme

It is wonderful again to sing the praises of the success of our Scholarship Programme. The school, situated in a poor rural area of Kenya continues to excel on all fronts but especially in academics as is evidenced from the results of the State Examinations. St Francis' was the Number One rural day school in Kenya.

This is a tremendous achievement and great credit must go to the Staff and Students of the school. This year it was particularly difficult because of the food shortage in Kenya. However due to your most generous sponsorship there was no disruption in the students' education. The school was able to provide daily



meals to those who were in need. The students that benefit most come from the poorest of conditions and would not be in school if it were not for your sponsorship. We especially accommodate girls who for the most part would not be able to attend Secondary School were it not for you. Indeed many girls do not even get a chance to finish Primary School. There is a saying, "When you educate a girl you educate the family". We firmly believe this to be true. Again, thank you so much for your most valuable and practical support.

A special note of thanks goes to Maura Flannery who constantly seeks sponsors and donors and coordinates the programme. We are most grateful for the wonderful job she does.

Alternate Initiation Rite for Girls

This is a programme that grew out of a discussion we had with local women concerned about the brutal practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Young girls were taken to the forest to be initiated into “womanhood”. This initiation resulted in young girls being circumcised in a most brutal manner. On their return to their village many had to be taken to hospital because of infection etc, some even died in the forest. In response to this an Alternate Initiation Rite was introduced.

The 2011 ban made the practice and capture of young girls for FGM in Kenya illegal, but it is still widespread even though research indicates a 20% drop in the practice.



This present program started in the early 2000s with just a small number of girls in attendance. The numbers have steadily increased and last year we had one hundred and twenty six girls that requested the Alternate Initiation Rite. We have no doubt that lives are being saved and that the health of the women is being safeguarded. We thank the many people who help fund this Initiation.

(franciscanbrian@yahoo.com)

Memoirs Br. William Martyn

“It’s a way of keeping me sane after retiring” - Br. William Martyn gives as the reason he is putting together his memories of rural life and farming in Ireland as he has lived through them. “Many of my observations come from my childhood and teenage years traversing the many villages in north Dunmore, Co. Galway” — the place where William grew up in the late forties and through the 1950s. He traces one of his earliest memory to September 14th, 1947 when he accompanied his father and older brother on the two mile journey to a neighbouring village to listen to a live radio broadcast from New York of a football match between Kerry and Cavan.

William retired this past



June after fifty-five years farming—on many of the congregation’s farms throughout the west of Ireland. He studied general agriculture in Mountbellew Agricultural College and Dairying in Clonakilty Ag. College and has been managing the dairy farm and working with students in Mountbellew for more than forty years. William is widely known throughout Galway for his expertise in dairying. Mountbellew Agriculture College now manages the dairy and dry stock farms on a long term lease agreement..

This is not Williams first time in putting pen to paper—in 2011 he published an extensive history of his family dating back 200 years. As we go to press with this 2017 Laudate, William’s ‘Memoirs’ is also with the printers. It is expected to hit the shelves shortly and should make good reading over Christmas holidays.

Fr. Padraig O’Connor RIP

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death on Wednesday, 27th September, of Fr. Padraig (the Very Reverend Padraig, Canon O’ Connor PE., - if we were to give

him his full title—which we never did!) Padraig was a wonderful friend of the Brothers and we miss him dearly. He was always a good warrant to drop in for a visit and celebrated Mass in our community practically every morning since retiring last year—including his last mass—the day before he died. He had been parish priest in Mountbellew/Moylough for eighteen years and during that time he celebrated Eucharist at most of our gatherings—including Jubilees, Reunions and Chapters. He was on the teaching staff of St. Jarlath’s College (Diocesan) for over twenty where, among many things, he directed the school musical. Before



coming to Mountbellew he served in a number of parishes throughout the diocese including Annaghdown in the late 1980s. The many comments on social media following his death are a real testament to the man: ... a great *sense of humour, was a lovely person, a true gentleman. ... great memories of a priest who brightened our day I remember you so well when we were in school in Tuam, such a lovely gentle man who always had a smile and time to speak to us. I’m so saddened to hear of his passing, he was my first and best boss extremely witty. I shall cherish*

the times we worked together - Rest in peace Fr. Pdraig, you are going to be missed big time ...

We extend our sincerest sympathies to Pdraig's sisters Veronica and Sister Teresa (Marist Sisters) brothers Sean and Monsignor Albert (Sacramento), extended family and many friends, as well as Archbishop Neary and priests and religious of the diocese.

*Ag Críost an Síol, Ag Críost an Fómhar, In Iothlann Dé, Go gCastar sinn. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.
Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís*

Br. Sylvester Carney RIP

(excerpt from Peter Roddy's homily at funeral Mass)

James Aidan Carney was born on the 25th of January 1942 in Glenfarne, Co. Leitrim. In fact we were never quite sure where he was from and he liked to keep people guessing. His introduction to the Franciscan Brothers was in 1955 when he came here to Clara and joined what was then St. Anthony's College. At that time the family lived in Smithboro, Co. Monaghan where he had attended the local national school and did a year at St. Tiernach's Secondary School in Clones. He made his first profession as a Franciscan Brothers in 1958 and his final commitment in 1963 – that was in Corrandulla, Co. Galway. He spent a further three years in Galway while attending NUIG (then known as UCG) where he studied English, History and Education.

Following his graduation from UCG he returned to Clara which was to be his permanent home for the next 53 years – first as a teacher/administrator at St. Anthony's College and then moving to Ard Scoil Chiarain where he spent almost 30 years, as teacher/administrator until his retirement in 2001.

As well as his work in School, Br. Sylvester was also involved in many community activities especially the GAA on a local, county



Sylvester on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee celebration with his two nieces, his sister Maura and his brother Pat.

and national level. He was secretary of the Offaly GAA in the late 80s and early 90s and spent close to twenty years as a committee member of Clara GAA. He was a founding member of the Clara Community games. He was a great supporter of Scor over many years – and continued his involvement until a couple of years ago. In recognition of his untiring support and commitment to the life and sport of this parish community, he was named Clara man of the year in the early 1970s.

For those who knew him, you might say Sylvester was a right stickler – and that can be defined as one who believes there is only one way of doing things – and that is the right way! The rule was to be followed, and nobody knew the rules better than Syl! And it wasn't just on the sports field when he held the referee's whistle, or around the Committee meeting table – but that was right through his life as a Franciscan Brother – he was completely committed to the promises he made at the time of his first profession as a Franciscan. He filled various roles in the Brothers' community over the years – one in particular was the role of Bursar – the one who manages the finances. Those accounts were kept meticulously and he didn't give up until every last cent was accounted for. He was a real stickler on that too. He was passionate about the Truth – we must admire him for that. That is how he worked.



In the family in which he grew up, from his father and mother, his brother and sister, his wider family and the environment - he learned values and boundaries rooted in a tradition of faithfulness to God and one another that he cherished and lived right to the very end. He was no stranger to this Church where he served as a Eucharistic Minister. He was also a leader of the Clara Folk Choir virtually from its beginnings up to 2009 – a role in which he took great pride and one of the highlights for him was accompanying the group to sing during the vigils at Knock.

There is no doubt that Syl had his share of pain and suffering, especially since he developed Parkinson's and its related illnesses some years ago. But this pain was borne in a quiet, uncomplaining way. When through our faith we know that death is not the end but the beginning, then we can begin to see the face of God even behind the pain and sadness we are asked to shoulder. We cannot eliminate the darkness that we feel at a time like this, and yet in this darkness our faith enables us to catch a glimpse of flickering light which the darkness is never able to completely extinguish.

.....Ar dheis de to raibh a anam usual

Adraa Agricultural College — Official Opening and Blessing - May 27th, 2017

Following the arrival of the Franciscan Brothers in west Nile, Uganda in January 2009 and after a lengthy discernment process it became clear that the greatest need in the wider area was for capacity building for efficient farming and non-farming rural enterprises. It was agreed that an agricultural college, focusing on practical education and training for sustainable agriculture and rural enterprises, would be the most appropriate response. This dream became a reality in May this year with the official opening and blessing of Adraa Agricultural College.

In his address at the opening the Irish Ambassador to Uganda Dónal Cronin (below) spoke in particular of the work the college was doing in responding to the influx of South Sudan refugees by integrating them into some of its programmes. He also lauded AAC as a good example of the deep bond of friendship and partnership between Ireland and Uganda and noted that the Irish Government, in investing over €85 million in Uganda between 2016 and 2020, is building on the great work of the Irish missionaries, past and present. The Irish Government, through Misean Cara, has been one of the major supporters of the development of the college over the past five years. The Ambassador thanked Br. Tony Dolan and the Franciscan Brother

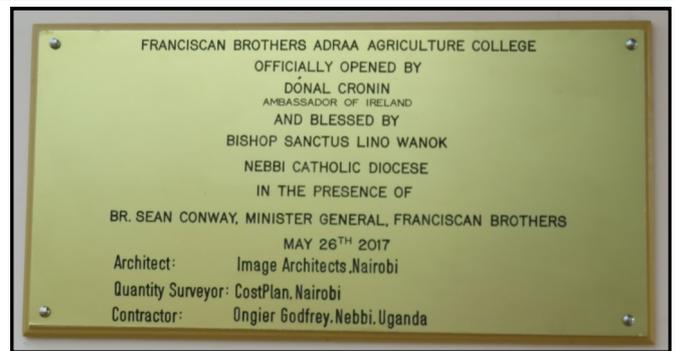


for their tireless work in seeing this project through as well as the principal and staff of the College, Board of management, Bishop Sanctus of Nebbi diocese, local and central government and the college's many supports and stakeholders.



Br. Sean addresses gathering at opening of College

Adraa Agricultural College focuses on upgrading the knowledge and skills of people in sustainable agriculture and rural development. It provides skills training by way of short courses which may vary in length from 40 hours (one week) to 500 hour (12 weeks). The curriculum for all courses includes technical, business, social, cultural, and spiritual components.



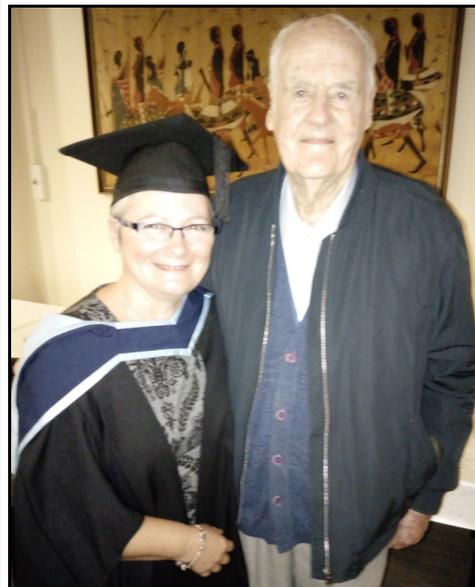
The emphasis in all training courses is on the participants acquiring skills that will enable them establish a viable enterprise in the area that they have chosen. Courses include sustainable



Bishop Sanctus Lino Wanok Blessed the new College

agriculture, irrigation, soil fertility, beekeeping, goats, pigs, poultry, value addition, cookery, hospitality, tree and fruit nursery, credit and savings. At a later stage it is hoped to add courses in rural businesses such as carpentry, mechanics, electrical & electronic, masonry, tailoring, and energy saving technologies.

As you have already read in Br. Tony's message, closely linked to the development of Adraa Agricultural College has been Sarah Oates who joined the Franciscan Brothers' mission in West Nile Uganda in 2012 having first come in contact with them when she was a student in Mountbellew Agricultural College in the early 1980s. She was



Sarah with Fr. Gerry Foley at her graduation —they worked together in Adraa.

instrumental in the development of Adraa Agricultural College and served as vice principal for a time. She also did much work in the local community especially with women's groups.

During her time in Uganda, with short spells in Ireland, Sarah completed an MA in International Development through Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Dublin where she graduated with honours on November 20th. Kimmage is affiliated with Maynooth University.

We congratulate Sarah on her great achievement.

Our Experience in Adraa Agricultural College

Martin Mulherrins (Galway) and Eilish Owens (Tyrone) are two young people who spent six weeks with us in Adraa recently. Martin has just finished his masters' degree in Agricultural Science. Part of the research for his study was done in New Zealand. Both did tremendous work with staff and students during their short stay with us. In addition to ordinary routine work, both have supported staff in developing student work books which are designed to meet the needs of illiterate or semi-illiterate students, who are the norm in Adraa.

Martin is an internationally renowned handballer, and during their time in Adraa he and Eilish introduced handball to the staff, students and people of the area. With the aid of a very generous donor in California, a handball alley has been erected in Adraa and there is an increasing interest in the game among the people. We believe it is a game, because of its beauty and relative low cost, that will grow in the local area of the college. Martin and Eilish share a little of the experience below.

Has it changed you? That was a question we were asked by an Irish visitor who was staying one night in Adraa Agriculture College last week. Even in the short period of a month, what both Eilish and I have experienced here has certainly changed us. I think we all know at home that there are people out there much more disadvantaged than us but when you come and see it, meet the people and hear their stories first hand it becomes far more real.

We have had the privilege to work with and to become friends with the most wonderful people who have come to the College from different parts of West Nile and from the refugee settlements. AAC are doing wonderful work in educating these students and providing them with lifelong skills that will help contribute to a more sustainable livelihood for them. We are confident in saying that because when we visited Bidibidi, the biggest refugee settlement in the world, we met with past students to find out how they were doing. Although they have many challenges such as having only plots of 30m x 30m and soil that is not that good, to see and hear how they have made the most of such difficult circumstances since leaving South Sudan is nothing short of inspiring. One of the students we met had no agricultural background before coming to AAC and now



he has made enough money from his plot that he has been able to rent another plot inside the settlement and indeed a half acre outside the settlement in the host community.

Furthermore, due to his success, Caritas are now using him and his plots for other farmers to learn from. It really highlighted what people can do if only they are given the opportunity.

We always knew we would learn more here than we would contribute but hopefully we have been some addition to the staff, students and local people here in Adraa. We have also been fortunate enough to visit a



number of the surrounding villages where Adraa staff work through the Offaka Development Programme (ODP). With the money we raised at home we have decided to implement two projects at Offaka Secondary School with the help of the Brothers and ODP. There have been a number of issues in the school and numbers have dropped significantly. To help give the school a boost we hope to have a handball wall completed this week and we hope to train some of the students and staff before we leave. This will be the first secondary school in Uganda and indeed in Africa to have such a facility. (We are also very excited about the state of the art handball facility that will be completed in AAC shortly!). The second project is the setting up of a demonstration plot within the school that will involve the building of a homestead and preparation of the land. The aim is to practically show and educate the students on the best practices available in growing vegetables/crops and having healthier homes e.g. using a chimney to reduce smoke, tippy tap's for hygiene and compost/rubbish management but to name a few.

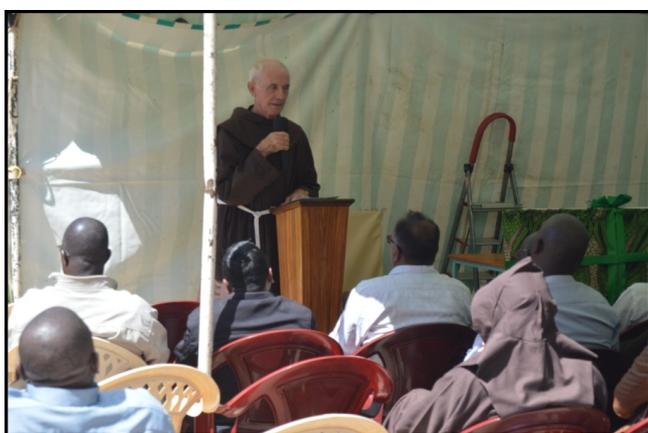
We would like to sincerely thank the Franciscan Brothers for giving us the opportunity to come and volunteer at AAC. Your hospitality, kindness and generosity is very much appreciated and we wish you all continued success in the future. God bless you all!

Martin Mulherrins and Eilish Owens

OFFICIAL OPENING AND BLESSING OF NEW GENERALATE HOUSE, BARAKA

The official opening and blessing of the Franciscan Brothers new house in Baraka took place on 27th November 2017. The approximately 80 guests included Brothers Sean Conway from Ireland and Hilarion O'Connor from California, Architect Majda Povoden, her professional team, contractor, worker representatives, local clergy and religious, co-worker representatives and neighbours.

The dignified, meaningful, beautiful ceremony was presided over by Fr. Lawrence Mbogo, Vicar General of Nakuru Diocese, representing Bishop Maurice Muhatia whose visit to Rome was extended at



Br. Tony Addressed the gathering

the last minute. Fr. Mbogo was assisted by Frs Moses Muraya, Martin Murimi, Martin Barry, Brian Tracey, Con Ryan and five other local priests.

Following is an extract from Br. Tony Dolan's address:



The new house in Baraka is designated as the Generalate of the Institute. This will be the main base of the Minister General and it will be the central administrative centre for the Institute. Mountbellew remains the Motherhouse of the Institute.

..... the new building is a wonderful gift for the promotion of the charism and mission of the Franciscan Brothers. The building is now designated as the Generalate House of our Institute. The future of the Institute is in Africa and this has been accepted at our 2015 and 2017 General Chapters. We will cel-



brate the bi-centennial of our foundation in 2018 and it is clear from the lack of vocations in the West that this is last generation of Franciscan Brothers in Ireland and the USA. The Church in Ireland and Europe is in maintenance mode as we await a charismatic leader who will point the way forward - another St. Francis or St. Clare!

Our charism and mission has much to offer Africa in



striving to meet the challenges facing the continent – economic, social, spiritual, demographic, migration, employment. In the context of the call and example of Pope Francis and from the direction of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals the charism and mission of the Franciscan Brothers is particular-



ly relevant for our time. This charism is: *‘to live the gospel way of life – and if we have to, use words’*

We strive to do this in a practical way – by empowering the most vulnerable in our communities through capacity and capability building to empower them to use their God given gifts/talents and available natural resources to make a decent livelihood. Charity is necessary but only as a last resort! The challenge is to provide holistic education and training suited to the needs of people at the level they are at and that will help them on to the first rung of the development ladder– the most difficult of all rungs to reach.



Br. Hilarion O'Connor and Fr. Lawrence Mbogo, Vicar General of Nakuru Diocese. Fr. Mbogo presided over the ceremony, representing Bishop Maurice Muhatia.

Currently our ministries in East Africa include: formation of young men for our way of life, Baraka Agriculture College, Peace & Environment Centre, St. Francis Secondary School and MCM Community Development Resource Centre, Adraa Agriculture

College and some of our Brothers teach in Government and non- Government schools and colleges. Our strategy is to provide affordable, top quality relevant education, training and extension for the people among whom we have the privilege to live and work. We are proud of the work and achievements of the ministries we manage but we know much more needs to be done. As St. Francis was wont to say: *‘let’s begin again because to date we’ve done nothing’*

How does this gift of a beautiful building fit into



our plans?

- A. It has the potential to be the nerve/energy centre of our Congregation from which our Brothers and Co-workers get the inspiration, motivation and the support required to be effective promoters of the Kingdom of God in the various areas in which they work.
- B. But the risk is that it will be a very comfortable, luxurious building to support laziness and indifference and lead to lives where the internet replaces community life; What’s App replaces prayer life and personal comfort replaces a passion and commitment to our marginalised sisters and brothers.

As you walk around the building you will see that Matthew McCormack, has hung two pictures— one Rembrandt’s *‘The Return of the Prodigal Son’* and the other is *‘Ribalu’s Icon of the Trinity.’*



Both of these pictures challenge us to grow in our knowledge, experience of and our relationship with God. I'm 71 years old and my image/concept of God has changed at least 70 times in my life. The icon is of God as community, a community of love that is sucking us into communion for eternity. Rembrandt paints an image of God in human terms – a compassionate, loving, forgiving father who will do everything in his power to suck us back into his embrace. We find it easy to relate to the prodigal son but in my experience of life in religious communities it is the elder son syndrome that create the most challenges – resentment, anger, jealousy, envy; sins that destroy individual and community relationships. Yet our all loving Creator loves both sons equally but leaves us the freedom to respond as we will.

If we as Franciscan Brothers are to grow and flourish and use the great gifts God has given us we must be men of a faith that is expressed that by passion, commitment, relevant, professional and intelligent strategies that will lift our marginalised sisters and brothers out of poverty to making meaningful contributions to the sustainable devel-



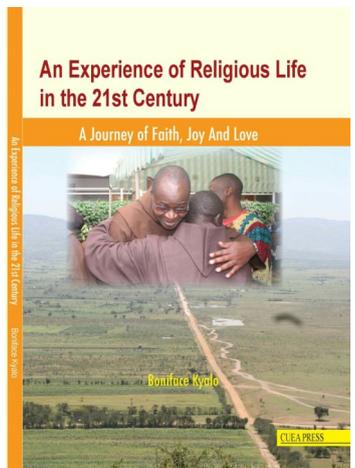
Tony with Fr. Martin Barry, St. Patrick's Society (Kiltegan) at the opening. Martin has been a long standing friend and supporter of the Franciscan Brothers .

opment of their families, communities, countries and humanity.

Finally people of my vintage should take the December 2017 intention of Pope Francis to heart: *that the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.*

Book Launch

Following the Opening of the new house was the official launch of Br. Boniface Kyalo's new book: **'An Experience of Religious Life in the 21st Century'** Fr. Mbogo launched the book after the Boniface gave a clear explanation of its genesis and aim. Representatives of the publishers, CUEA Press, were also present. After the launch the signed copies went on sale with Fr. Martin Barry beating all competition to acquire the first copy for a substantial investment of €100 (Ksh 12,000). Copies of the book are now available at the modest fee of Ksh 800 (€7).



Many congratulations to Br. Boniface on this great, unique achievement.

Graduation 01 December 2017 A New Beginning for 19 Dedicated Students

Brigid Ryan

Graduation days are always special for the graduate and their families whether one is graduating from Nursery School, Primary, Secondary or College/University. It's a landmark. So why should Friday December 1st 2017 be any different? We, the team in Adraa Agriculture Training College, West Nile, Uganda were celebrating the graduation of our first class of Catering and Hospitality students.

The dream that Adraa Agriculture College could offer a course, tailored to suit the needs of young people in the Catering and Hospitality, allowing

them make a sustainable living, had become a reality. I have watched the completion of the new Value Addition unit over the past 18 months. Many builders, engineers, plumbers, electricians, tilers, painters, carpenters, came and lived on site— all experts, each with his own specific job, each working with very simple tools. No



Brigid Ryan

power drills, no diggers, no scaffolding (simple bamboo structures used to complete the magnificent teak ceiling in the dining cum conference room). All worked under the dedicated guidance of Contractor Eng. Ongier Godfrey. The building was completed the night before our first intake of students!

As well as recruits from several districts in West Nile, we had four Sudanese from the refugee settlement camps. Nineteen students in total, three men and sixteen women, many married. Some came with their toddlers still being breast fed. Of course they were all very quiet and shy, unsure of what the next six weeks had to offer them. It was strange to see their reaction to flushing toilets, water pouring out of a wall to wash, even hot water (thanks to solar), sleeping on mattresses on raised beds. Food served four times a day was really welcomed, many joked that they would need adjustments to their clothes. Life in Africa for our sisters/women is one of real service. Their daily tasks include drawing the water in jerrycans on their heads for all household requirements, collecting the firewood to fuel all the cooking, preparing, cooking and serving the two or three daily meals for their large families. They dig, plant and harvest the crops. A couple of evenings each week they walk to their local markets and trade for their food requirements. These people simply work from dawn 'till dusk, and still they smile!



Market Day

Life here in Adraa College was a dream for them, a real holiday from daily chores, a crèche available for their children. This was the first chance they ever had to learn new skills, listen and participate in discussions, chat and talk in safety and enjoy the little luxu-



ries like having their hair redesigned (they love extensions and hair pieces) and manicures, even hand nail designs!

The students grew, blossomed, learnt so much, they were so eager to gain as much knowledge as was possible. They were wonderful, a teachers dream class.

The College being residential, there are so many extra hours when the electricity is working to do the little extra things with them. You get to know most of the students, learn about their challenges, their lives and the crosses they have suffered. Sometimes I find their stories so sad, I feel so helpless, yet they will shake my hand and tell me 'that is life'! Now they have new energy, new skills that have opened their eyes to a new exciting world. God bless them and please God

they will continue to get strength and energy to have a better life.

Classes run each day at 8.00AM till 6.00 PM. At least 80% of these were practical. The course was really very similar to the format used in Ireland in the Rural Economy Schools in the 50s and 60s. At the end of the six weeks, students were given a start up kit to enable them to set up small businesses. For example making chapatis/mandazis/pancakes for sale in the local market. Making liquid soap, or setting up a small cafe where they can sell teas and simple meals, or even making and decorating cakes for special occasions using simple local ovens. This course should enable these students to make at least 10,000 Ugandan Shillings (€2.2) per day, which will help them to improve their lives and that of their loved ones. We plan to visit each student in their work place at the end of eight weeks, something I am already excited about doing.



The team were honoured that our graduation guest of honour was Minister General of the Franciscan Brothers, Br. Tony Dolan, who drove over 780 kms, a two day trip to be with us. Our College Principal Br Charles was proud of his staff who were such willing facilitators throughout the course - Madame Alice, Br. Tony Og, Br. Alex, Sr Anna, Mr James Dramva, Mr. Kennedy Adaku and Ms Mary Enyaru. The College Education Department were also present, Mr Johnson and Mr Franco were invaluable supporters of the course.

I would also like to thank all the people in Ireland, who through their kind generosity made all this possible. We are presently planning a second course which hopefully will commence in early February 2018.



A Visitor to Adraa

Brid Ni Locha

I have been privileged to be a visitor here in Adraa for the past two weeks. I have been visiting my friend Brigid Ryan who is a volunteer here and seeing first-hand the wonderful work that is being done at the college and the benefits that accrue to the local communities as a result. The welcome and hospitality I received from the Brothers and the local people was warm and inviting and I would like to say a sincere thank you to them all.

A highlight of my stay was a visit to the nearby village of Nyanyabu where the outreach workers from Adraa have been working for a number of years. On this visit we were very fortunate to be accompanied by Mary Enyaru from the college staff who was one of the first workers to visit this village. She and her colleagues were involved in meetings with local women in their villages and helping them articulate their needs. From these beginnings



Brid's visit to Nursery School

the Nyanyabu women's group identified a need for a nursery school for their village. This offers a two year childhood education programme to preschool children to prepare them for primary school which in Uganda starts when children are 7 years old. This project is funded by donations from friends of Brigid. It was wonderful to meet Josephine Eyotaru, head teacher and her management team. Preschool children from Nyanyabu and the



neighbouring villages attend the nursery school which they have named Spring Nursery school.

The funding has also enabled two interested and committed community members to be trained as nursery teachers. Even though our visit was on a Saturday and not a school day, pupils came to meet us dressed in their attractive blue school uniforms and entertained us in song and story.

The last two weeks have been a wonderful opportunity for me to see what has, is being and what can be achieved here in Adraa and how it benefits so many local people and their communities.

My visit, though short, has been very enjoyable and worthwhile.



Bros. Dominic Omoro and Alex Orimesiga at the entrance to Adraa Agricultural College and Franciscan Brothers' Community. In their roles as vocation animators for our East African Region they recently met in Adraa to review plans for the promotion for vocations to our Brotherhood.

New Members

On the 2nd of September we had a very joyful celebration at our novitiate in Baraka for receptions to postulancy, novitiate and to first profession and renewal of vows. Three young men made first profession: Paul Matsiko – from Mbarara Diocese, Uganda; Anthony Kamido Mucheru – Nyahuru Diocese, Kenya; Felix Waswa Wande – Kakamega Diocese, Kenya.

Four entered the Novitiate and six started the Postulancy programme. Five Brothers renewed their vows for one year. With each new member comes a blessing and new hope.

Mountbellew to Adraa

When the chapel in the Agricultural College, Mountbellew was demolished in 1970, among the items saved were the stations of the cross. These lay high in the rafters in a farm store until 2016 when Br. Alphonsus Gavigan decided to rescue them. Over a nine month period Alf worked painstakingly

at bringing the beautiful frames back to their former glory. As the original images went astray over the 45 years the late Ray Carroll's images in the present college oratory were reproduced as a modern replacement.

Alf decided the most appropriate place for the stations was in our local Church in Adraa. On Palm Sunday this year the 'Mountbellew' stations of the cross were unveiled in a colourful ceremony. Before hanging the Stations, the church was given a facelift with a fresh coat of paint that was financed by the local Christians with the aid of a €800 gift from the Apostolic Society in the Diocese of Kilmore, Ireland.



Br. Alphonsus Gavigan with local Church members and below with Bishop Sanctus Lino Wanok and Bishop Martin Luluga on the occasion of the unveiling the Stations of the Cross



The almost 200 years of Mountbellew history and patrimony will be enshrined for a long time in Adraa. The simple faith and piety of the local Ugandan people will ensure that those who drew inspiration from these Stations over the years they hung in Mountbellew, will be remembered. And Alf is happy that his dream is now fulfilled and this very meaningful connection will ensure that the two communities are linked for years to come.

A special word of thanks must go to all in Mountbellew and Adraa who assisted Alf in this major undertaking.

General Chapter 2017

Even though we had a General Chapter in July 2015, the tragic death of our Minister General, Br. Michael Burke in August 2016, necessitated having a Chapter this year. While a number of issues were considered by the twenty-one delegates who gathered in Mountbellew at the end of June, the main work of the assembly was to elect new leadership. Special tributes were paid to our dearly departed Brother Michael during our meetings.

Delegates to General Chapter



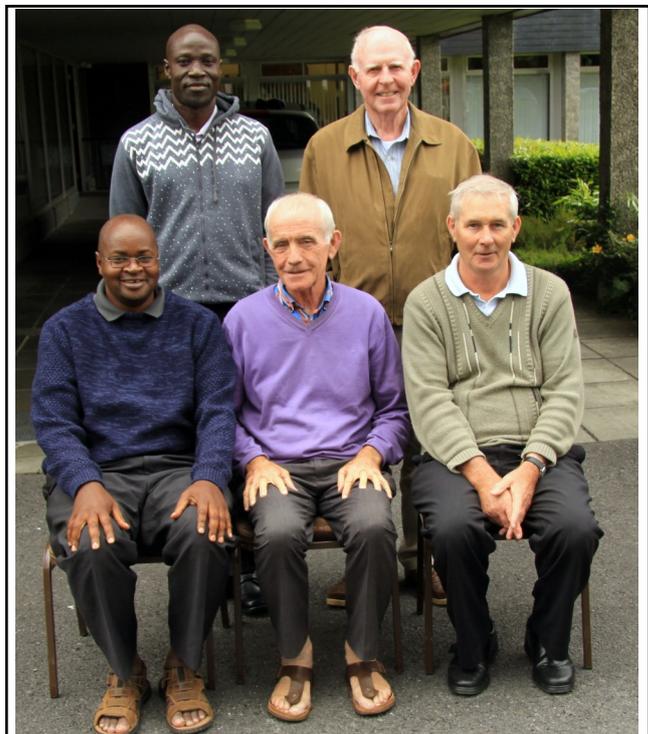
Front: Boniface Kyalo, Pius Muasa, Paulinus Horkan, Tony Dolan, Bobby Moore (facilitator) Bernard Kariuki, Vivian Cotter, Sean Conway,
Back: Fidelis Mambo, Matthew Nyachoti, Conal Thomas, Gerald Smith, Peter Roddy, Matthew McCormack, Charles Lagu, Tom Fahy, Hilarion O'Connor, Brian Johnson, William Martyn. (not pictured: James Mungovan and Denis O'Sullivan)

Our 2017 General Chapter elected the following leadership team: Tony Dolan – Minister General; Sean Conway – Vicar General; Charles Lagu – General Councillor; Hilarion O'Connor – General Councillor; Boniface Kyalo – General Councillor.

The following appointments were made at the first meeting of the new leadership: Bursar General – Hilarion O'Connor; Secretary General – Bernard Kariuki; Procurator General – Boniface Kyalo.



Six Brothers from East Africa attended the General Chapter—three for the first time. They are pictured here with Brothers from California



LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR NEXT SIX YEARS

L to R: Boniface Kyalo, Charles Luga, Tony Dolan, Hilarion O'Connor and Sean Conway

Celebrating Seventy Years as Franciscans



2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the first profession of our Brothers, Edmund Farrell and Laurence Grimes. We offer them our sincere congratulations and thanks for all their years of service to our Institute and the people of God. May the Lord continue to bless them for their dedication and service. Below: Laurence and Edmund with their fellow novices in 1947. We remember the many from that group that have gone to their eternal reward.



Novices 1947 - Back: Gabriel Murphy, Laurence Grimes, Ignatius (Frank) Walsh, Celsus (Fergal)McElgun. **Middle:** Norbert Reilly, Damian (Joe) Lynch, Louis (Jimmy) Drumm, Edmund Farrell **Front:** Conrad Downey, Sylvester Kearney, Stanislaus Burns (NM), Killian Kearney, Dominic Mannion.

Message from Minister General (cont. from front):

Sympathy and Prayers: this year sister death has been particularly hard on the families of many of our good friends and supporters. We reminder especially Canon Pádraic O'Connor, Joe McMonagle, Chrissie Ruane and Michael Keary from Mountbellew; Fr. Paddy Foley CSSp; Br. Fidelis Mambo's father, Bishop Cornelius Korir and Fr. Peter Mungai in Kenya. Two Sisters from the congregation of the MSMCMC - our co-workers in Uganda. We convey our sympathy and prayers the families and friends of those mentioned and to all of you who have lost loved ones during the year. May they all be in eternal peace in that great eternal community of love, which is God.

Thanks: We are most grateful to all who support our mission in East Africa. Our Brothers in Ireland and California; agencies such as Mísean Cara and Irish Aid; Míserior, Trocaire, Gorta/SHA, Caritas Austria, Sign of Hope, Manos

Unidas, Brighter Communities Worldwide, New York Cavan Association, Mountbellew PPU, Combined Services, Electric Aid, Br. Denis Lawlor's Family, Viatores Christi, Columban Missionary Society (Dalgan Park, Navan), Kilmore Apostolic Works, our families, communities and friends in Loughrea, Mountbellew/Moylough, Ballyjamesduff, Clara, Clifden, Currandulla, Bray, Banagher, Dublin, Aghnasheelin, Ballinamore, Barna, Kilcloon, Drogheda, Termini-feckin, Kenya, Uganda, California and Britain. We are also grateful for the support we get from the dioceses of Meath, Tuam, Los Angeles, Nebbi, Nakuru and from many religious institutes. We also wish to acknowledge the wonderful support of countless individuals who contribute so generously to the support of our mission. A special word of thanks to Brian Johnson, who almost every week-end, promotes the work of missionaries in general and the Franciscan Brothers in particular in different parishes throughout Ireland. This year Brian is working in Raphoe Diocese and as usual people have been extraordinarily generous. We also acknowledge Brigid Ryan and Friends, Br. Alphonsus Gavigan, Vincent Flynn, Pat Connolly and others for their work and commitment in preparing containers to transport goods for the support of the Brothers' mission in Uganda.

We ask our all loving, caring Creator to take good care of each of you and your loved ones.

Wishing each one of you and your loved ones a blessed, joy filled Christmas and every good in 2018.

*Br. Tony Dolan
Minister General*

Remembering ...

Again this year, we will be keeping in our thoughts and prayers our Brothers who will not be celebrating Christmas in Community. Br. Kevin Bourke, Edmund Farrell and Hyacinth Kennedy, due to ill health, are in nursing homes. Kevin is in Queen of Peace Nursing Home, Churchfield, Knock, Co. Mayo. Both Edmund and Hyacinth are in Flannery's Nursing Home, Chapel Rd, Abbeyknockmoy, Tuam, Co. Galway. We are grateful to the nursing home management and staff for the wonderful care that our Brothers receive.

Franciscan Brothers' Generalate, PO Box 52, Molo, Kenya, East Africa. Tel: Br. Tony Dolan: +254 722 604785 / +256 784 444910 Email: tonydolan7@gmail.com

Franciscan Brothers, Newtown, Mountbellew, Co Galway, Ireland Tel. 00 353 90 9679295 Email: franciscanbrs@eircom.net

A sincere word of thanks to all who contributed articles/photos for this 'Laudate'.

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