

Capuchin Connection



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FRANCISCANS**
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The Christmas Crib

This time every year in schools, churches, homes, hospitals, hospices and shopping centres the Christmas Crib stands as a tangible reminder to us that God is real and God is with us. Cribs come in all shapes and sizes and often reflect the cultural context they are in. A crib is an important part of Christmas symbolism and a doorway to deeper reflection and prayer.



*St Francis at the first crib at Greccio.
Stained glass window, St Francis College Chapel,
Rochestown, Cork*

The formation of the first Christmas crib is attributed to St Francis of Assisi. In 1223, just three years before his death, Francis went to visit the Friars living in the remote mountain village of Greccio. St Bonaventure tells us that in order to excite the people of Greccio to celebrate the birth of the Saviour with all solemnity, Francis brought together all the elements of the stable in Bethlehem into what would become the very first Christmas crib.

Francis used real people, straw and animals to bring the Christmas story to life for the people of Greccio. People came from far and wide to see this spectacle. The night was aglow with candlelight as hymns were sung in praise of the God who is with us.

Francis was very real and very practical. He understood that as human beings we often need to see, hear and even smell something before it can enlighten our minds and ignite our hearts. As Francis carefully brought the characters of the Christmas scene together, he also skilfully brought the people of Greccio together; uniting them in prayer and praise around a living and breathing expression of God's connection with the human story. The crib remains a beacon of peace, hope and reconciliation and offers an opportunity for us to reflect upon the deeper message it represents.

In this issue of *Capuchin Connection* we meet Brother Dermot Lynch OFM Cap., who shares a little about what attracted him and sustains him as a Capuchin Friar. We have a special insight into the work of the Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People and a profile of four Capuchin Post-Novice students who are living and ministering in Raheny.

As always, you can contact us by email on ofmcapcoms@gmail.com. We hope you enjoy this issue and we wish all our readers a peace-filled and blessed Christmas.

The Capuchin Connection Team

Friar in Focus: Brother Dermot Lynch OFM Cap, Guardian of Holy Trinity, Cork.

Hello. My name is Br. Dermot Lynch and I am the Guardian of Holy Trinity Church in Cork City.

As you would expect from a former wool worker in Blarney Woolen Mills: it was the Capuchin habit that first caught my eye and attracted me to the Capuchins! I'd known the material from which it was made since it was shorn off the sheep's back!

But what really captured my heart was the joy and inviting words of the man who wore it - Br. Edward Dunne. I met Brother Edward when he visited the woolen mills from Holy Trinity. Of course for me, it is not so important why one joins the Capuchins; what is important is why one stays. What keeps me here is God's goodness and mercy to me as well as the goodness and kindness I experience living as part of a Capuchin Fraternity. What also sustains me in my vocation is my interaction with the people who come to our Friary and the people who invite me to be part of some of the most important moments of their lives, whether these are joyful or sorrowful moments. For me these people are heroes of Gospel-living. Their lives and example both challenge and inspire me.

To sum up, for me, living the Gospel as a Capuchin is something I'm still learning to do - little by little, day by day.



Brother Dermot is pictured here (right) on the occasion of his mother's 100th birthday with his sister Ann and Brother Mike Burgess OFM Cap.

Brother Dermot Lynch OFM Cap.

Meet our Post Novices

Post-Novitiate is the stage of Capuchin formation that exists between a student friar professing temporary vows and making a life-long commitment to the Capuchin way of life by professing Solemn Vows. Currently we have four post-novice brothers living in the Capuchin Friary Raheny and involved in various apostolates.

Br Antony Kurian is originally from Kerala in India and before joining the Irish Capuchin Province worked as an Engineer on the LUAS project in Dublin. Antony is currently studying Philosophy at St Patrick's College Maynooth and is involved in ministries both inside and outside the Friary. Br Ben Shore joined the Capuchins in New Zealand in 2008 and is currently spending a year of apostolic work here in Ireland. Br Ben is presently ministering to the homeless in the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin. Last month we were delighted to welcome Brother Ade Green and Brother Jared Jamie back to Ireland. Both Ade and Jared completed their Novitiate in Kilkenny in September 2017 and have now returned to Raheny to for a post-novitiate pastoral experience. Br Ade is originally from Plymouth and is a member of the Capuchin Province of Great Britain, and Brother Jared comes to us all the way from the Custody of South Africa. We ask you to keep our student brothers in your prayers as they continue their ministry and study.



L-R: Brothers Ben, Jared, Ade and Antony

The Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People

Smithfield and the old market areas of Dublin 7 have experienced somewhat of a regeneration in recent years and are fast becoming vibrant and cosmopolitan places. In the midst of this stands the Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People.

The Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People was founded in 1969 by Brother Kevin Crowley OFM Cap and has operated for over forty years under the guiding principle that 'nobody should go hungry'. Over the years the Centre has evolved from a small lean-to at the side of the Capuchin Friary in Church Street that provided soup and sandwiches to the men leaving the local homeless hostels, into one of the primary centres for provision to homeless people in the country today.



Brother Kevin explaining the work of the Day Centre to students from St Francis College, Rochestown, Cork

Today the centre provides almost 1,000 meals each day, as well as over 1,500 food parcels each Wednesday morning. Over the last number of years the Centre has added a dentist surgery, optician, barbers and shower facilities in addition to the services of a Doctor, Nurse and Chiropodist. Besides providing food and medical services, the Centre often distributes essential clothing and footwear to the homeless who visit there. But beyond all of this the Capuchin Day Centre provides a safe place for people to come; a refuge in often dangerous and chaotic circumstances.

In recent times the Centre has seen a marked increase in the number of families and children using the services there. It has a dedicated family area and the children's Christmas Party is always a joyful occasion

whereby the children who come to the centre get to meet Santa and get a Christmas present. A simple yet powerful encounter that my otherwise be denied to them because of the circumstances they find themselves in.

Brother Kevin often reflects that without the generosity of the benefactors as well as the dedicated staff and many volunteers, the Centre just couldn't operate. It has always been the policy of the Day Centre that every cent donated is used to provide services directly to those most in need. Today, the annual running costs of the Centre have surpassed three million euro.

For more information on the work of the Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People or to see how you may be able to help, visit www.capuchindaycentre.ie or phone 01 872 770

St Michan's Parish Book Launch

St Michan's Parish: A view outside of ourselves' tells the story of some of the people involved in the life of this inner city parish, which we Capuchins care for on behalf of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Written by Paddy Pender, Parish Secretary, this book is now available for sale at a price of €12.00 from the St Michan's Parish website (www.stmichansrc.ie) and all proceeds go to the church restoration fund.



Author Paddy Pender with Parish Priest, Br Bryan Shortall OFM Cap.

Capuchin Mission Office 2018 Calendar

The 2018 Capuchin Overseas Missions Calendar is now available from the Capuchin Mission Office in Church Street Dublin and from all our Friaries. The Calendar is beautifully produced and has taken on the theme of the World Meeting of Families 2018. The calendar includes quotes from Amoris Laetitia throughout as points of reflection to help us prepare for the World Meeting of Families in August 2018.

The calendar is priced at 2 euro and all proceeds go to aid the valuable work of the Capuchin Overseas Missions.

The calendar is an ideal Christmas gift for those at home and abroad.



Capuchin Vocations at the Divine Mercy Conference 2018



The Irish Capuchin Friars will have a significant presence at the 2018 Divine Mercy Conference in the RDS from 16th – 18th February 2018.

This is a major event for us in our Year of Capuchin Vocation and we are delighted to have been invited to lead evening prayer as part of the event.

The Conference attracts over 5,000 to the RDS each year and includes talks, workshops, prayer, adoration, reconciliation and Mass.

For more information on tickets visit www.divinemercyconference.com

A Christmas Blessing...

May the Lord of hope fill you with joy and faith, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
(Romans 15:13)

The Capuchin Friars wish you and your family every blessing of peace and joy that Christmas brings.



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