

Capuchin Connection

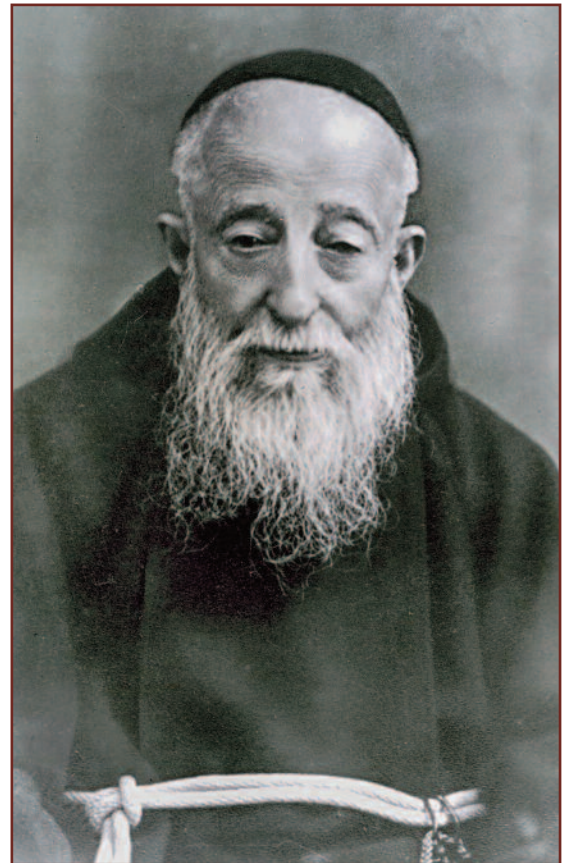


Welcome to our Spring issue of Capuchin Connection. The days are getting longer and the sun is trying its best to brighten our days and we hope this issue finds you well as you make your Lenten journey. This year saw an unusual start to the Lenten season as Ash Wednesday coincided with Saint Valentine's day. On reflection it was probably a very fitting start to this holy season. Each year our Lenten journey takes us from where we are and through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving, invites us to enter more deeply into relationship with Jesus Christ. This is a journey that begins in, and is sustained by, love. As we journey towards deeper relationship with God we also journey into a deeper relationship with ourselves, others and with the whole of creation.

Saint Leopold Mandic was a man who understood this journey well. Leopold was born in Croatia in 1866 and died in Padua in 1942. He joined the Capuchins aged 18 and was ordained a priest in 1880. He is best remembered for his ministry as a confessor. Leopold spent long hours hearing confessions, helping people take a step or two forward on their spiritual journey. He was known for his kindness, compassion and quick wit. Although Saint Leopold was only just over four feet in height, he was undoubtedly a spiritual giant.

In 2016, at the beginning of the Year of Mercy Pope Francis asked the Capuchins to bring the incorrupt bodies of both Saint Leopold and Padre Pio to Rome for Ash Wednesday, where he named them as 'Apostles of Mercy'. Both men had spent much of their Capuchin ministry leading people to God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Leopold regularly advised people with these words 'Be at peace; place everything on my shoulders. I will take care of it' adding that 'I give my penitents only small penances because I do the rest myself.' For Leopold God was a God of love and his job was to help people discover the joy of this love for themselves, through the power of God's mercy and forgiveness.



As we continue our Lenten journey together we pray that Saint Leopold will guide and protect us as we walk in faith towards a deeper encounter with the Risen Lord.

In this issue of *Capuchin Connection* Brother Bryan Shortall OFM Cap is our *Friar in Focus*. Brother Bryan is currently the Parish Priest to Halston Street Parish, one of the oldest parishes in the heart of Dublin's markets area. We are also delighted to feature the launch of the new book by Brother Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap and much more besides.

Thank you for making this connection with us. If you have any feedback or suggestions you are very welcome to e-mail, ofmcapcoms@gmail.com.

The Capuchin Connection Team

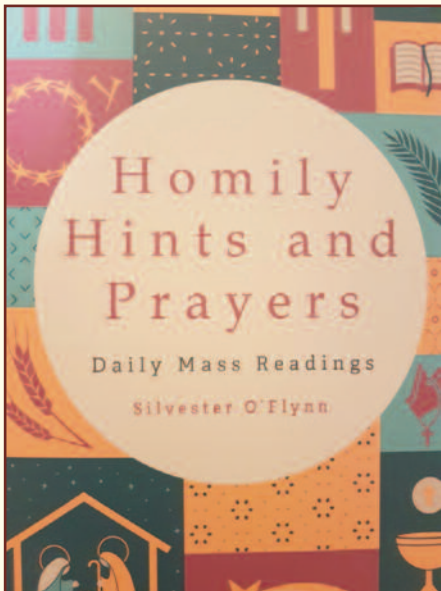
Brother Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap. Launches 'Homily Hints and Prayers'

A great crowd turned out in Holy Trinity Capuchin Cork for the launch of Brother Silvester's book of reflections and prayers centred on the daily gospels called Homily Hints and Prayers: Daily Mass Readings.

Brother Silvester's books are a valuable source of guidance and inspiration for anyone working with the Gospels and he is well-known for his reflections on the three cycles of Sunday Mass Readings. He also wrote Sunday Seeds and The Responsorial Psalms of Sunday.



(Brother Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap at the launch in Holy Trinity, Cork)



The book's publishers Columba Press write on their website that 'this book offers two very short reflections on the daily Gospels. These simple and clear reflections would take two minutes at most and a preacher might use either one or both. They are called homily hints because a preacher can use them to trigger his own thoughts, and the best book is the one that makes you do your own thinking.'

Pope Francis has himself called on preachers to use their homilies well and has encouraged them to be brief and to the point. This book is an excellent resource not alone for those preparing daily homilies but also for anyone wanting to incorporate a daily gospel reflection into busy schedules.

Homily Hints and Prayers: Daily Mass Readings is available from Columba Press and is priced €19.99.

An invitation from the Capuchin Friars...



We are delighted to announce that we will host a vocation retreat in our Kilkenny Friary on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th of April 2018. This experience is for men aged between 20 and 40 who are discerning a call to religious life and would like to know more about the Capuchin way of life. It's also a great opportunity to meet with some of the Friars and to join in the prayer of the community.

If you would like to know more about the vocation retreat or know somebody who would, please e-mail our Vocation Promoter Brother Martin at

capuchinvocation@gmail.com

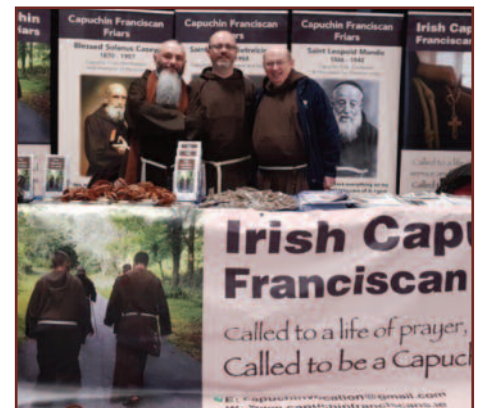
Capuchins Vocation Stand at the Divine Mercy Conference



As part of the *Year of Capuchin Vocation* we were delighted to have a strong Capuchin presence at the Divine Mercy Conference in the RDS. Hundreds of people came to visit our stand to say hello, ask for prayers and to receive blessings with the relics of St Pio and St Leopold. Our Provincial Vocations Commission wish to thank all the friars who came to help out over the weekend.

We were privileged to have visiting Capuchin friars there from Great Britain, Poland, Italy, South Africa and Ethiopia as well as Irish friars from our Donegal, Kilkenny, Raheny, Church Street and Priorswood communities. It was a true expression of the internationality of the Capuchin vocation and a great opportunity for us to promote vocations to the Capuchin way of life.

(Brothers Richard, Sean, Jared and Martin pictured at the Divine Mercy Conference)



Friar in Focus: Brother Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. Parish Priest, St Michan's Parish, Dublin.

In my ministry as Parish Priest, I am privileged on a daily basis to encounter people who inspire and encourage me to be the best Capuchin Friar that I can be. The people we work with and minister to are good, kind and compassionate people. In a very real way I am always encouraged and often moved, by people's resilience in the face of life's difficulties.



The Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People, the Kilkenny Food Project and countless other projects are filled with people of all ages, from all walks of life, who roll up their sleeves and volunteer. I find this truly inspirational and their generosity constantly reminds me of my call to serve the needs of those on the margins of society.

When I meet our parishioners here in St. Michan's, Halston St. and Arran Quay, or the pupils from our two Parish Schools - Presentation Primary School, George's Hill and St Paul's CBS North Brunswick St. – I am always struck by the positive impact our simple Capuchin presence has on their lives. It's great to feel part of this inner-city community.

When I think back over those years since I joined the Order, I discover more about what it means to be a Capuchin when I remember the great Capuchin Friars who I was lucky enough to know. Those whom I lived with while I was a student and young priest, many of whom have now returned to God, remain an inspiration. Even today, the listening to and sharing in the experiences and wisdom of our elder Friars continues to guide me,

step by step, along the path of St Francis of Assisi.

Finally, I learn what it means to be a Capuchin from our Holy Father, Pope Francis and how he reminds us about the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, especially for the poor and for families.

Pope Francis to visit the tomb of St Pio on St Patrick's Day

Pope Francis will visit the tomb of our Capuchin brother, St Pio, on the 17th of March 2108 to mark the 100th anniversary of Saint Pio receiving the stigmata.

As part of this pastoral visit the Pope also plans to visit St Pio's birthplace in Pietrelcina. Full details are due to be released closer to the time. Pope Francis will be the third successive Pope to visit and pray at the tomb of St Pio.

We ask St Pio to continue to protect Pope Francis in his ministry to the Church and the World.



(Photo credit: Padre Pio TV)

Ash Wednesday by Brother Richard Hendrick OFM Cap.

And so Lent begins with holy ash...

A reminder of the dust we come from, breathed into life by Love...



A reminder of the ashes of our past, the sins and the burdens we are exhausted from carrying...

A reminder of the desert spaces where Life has not been allowed to enter...

A reminder of the dark spaces that shut out the Light...

A reminder of our bodily destiny, our dissembling into dust again when our last breath will breathe its way back to Love...

We bear the holy ash today, not proudly, but as the mark of one who knows their need for the renewing breath of the One who IS Love, is Life, is Light...

The One who will call us into the desert of transformation, the desert of conversion, the desert of the Cross and there sow seeds of Resurrection joy that will bloom from the ashen dust, irrigated by tears of truth, warmed by the Sun of Love, made fertile by the planting of prayer within its barrenness...

So Lent begins and together we each enter its desert to be alone with Him who makes the desert bloom again...

Blessings on you and yours this Lenten Season +

Easter Ceremonies in our Friaries

Please check our website www.capuchinfranciscans.ie as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages for full details of the Easter Triduum ceremonies in our various friaries. A full list of times will be available before Palm Sunday.



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