



Capuchin Connection




**CAPUCHIN
FRANCISCANS**
PROVINCE OF IRELAND

Welcome to the Spring issue of *Capuchin Connection*. Each year Spring brings with it a sense of hopefulness after the long dark days of winter. It also brings with it a sense of encouragement as we witness nature bursting into life all around us. It can be a time for reflection, contemplation and renewal as we move towards Lent and the great liturgical celebrations of the Easter Season.



As Capuchin Franciscans we follow the rule and life of Saint Francis of Assisi and this rule calls us to live as brothers to all we meet, including all of creation. In many ways, Spring is nature's way of reminding us that we are part of a greater reality. That we are brothers and sisters within an ever expanding and evolving universe that is held in perfect balance by the Creator's infinite goodness.

Saint Francis himself found solace and a deep sense of peace in nature. He often retreated to isolated forests and caves to be alone with God. In these places Francis found that his very being could communicate with the Source of All Being. Francis was transformed by these encounters.

Today this type of contemplative practice has many names such as 'forest bathing' and 'mindful walking'. Time in nature is being prescribed by doctors as an antidote for stress, anxiety, depression and a myriad of other illnesses. Francis knew the positive benefits of this practice, and practiced it himself over 800 years ago. However, rather than just 'bathing' in the forest alone, Francis bathed in the Glory of God echoed in the beauty that surrounded him and this in turn allowed Francis to walk compassionately alongside those he met.

In today's world our attention is oftentimes hijacked by our screens and devices. We spend more and more time gazing at manufactured images of reality and in doing so run the risk of missing out on nature's great symphony that surrounds us. Spring is an opportunity

for us to tune into the wonder of Creation and to allow that beauty to heal, sustain and inspire us as we journey on this pilgrim road together.

In a special feature for the Spring issue of *Capuchin Connection* Brother Richard Hendrick OFM Cap., invites us to discover the beauty of Ard Mhuire Capuchin Friary and Retreat Centre in Donegal. We also pay a visit to the Capuchin Archives in our Capuchin Heritage feature. As always thank you for taking the time to read *Capuchin Connection*. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve please let us know by emailing ofmcapcoms@gmail.com.

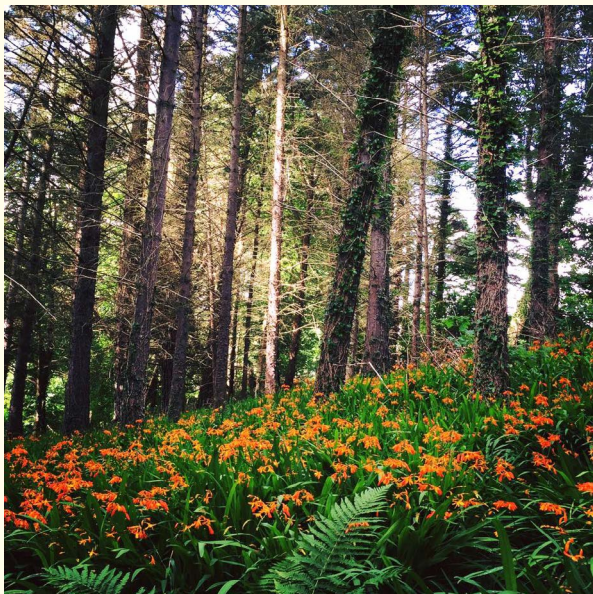
We hope you enjoy this issue and remember to pass on your copy of *Capuchin Connection* or recycle it when finished.

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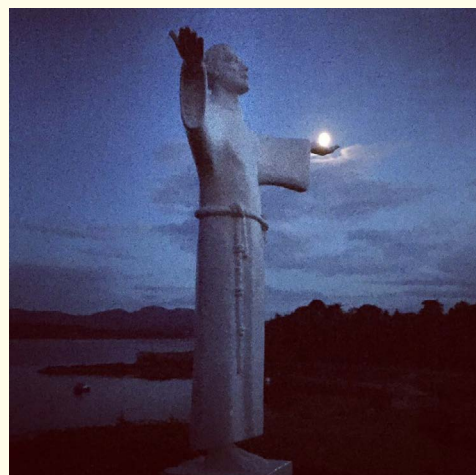
The Capuchin Connection Team

Ard Mhuire: A Place Apart

Ard Mhuire is located along the Wild Atlantic Way in north west Donegal and situated in 100 acres of pristine woodland, unspoilt beaches and awe-inspiring sea cliff walks. The Capuchin fraternity of Ard Mhuire,



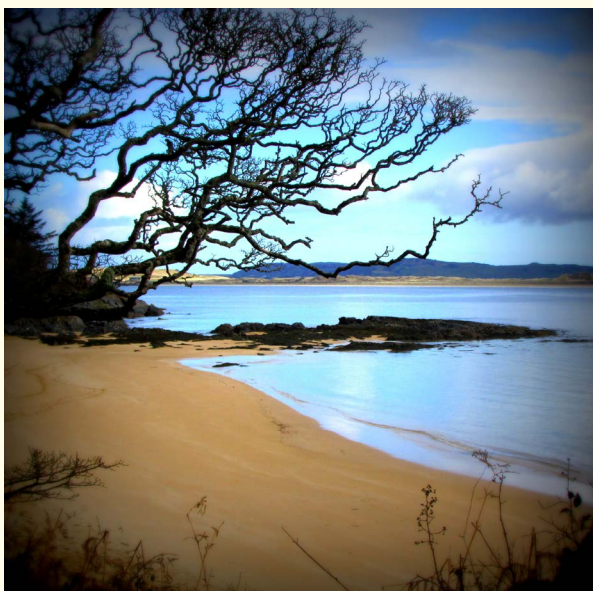
or Ards Friary as it is more commonly known these days, is the perfect place for a retreat, a time to re-connect with God. Many who visit do this through prayer in our chapels, walks beneath the forest canopy or by relaxing in front of our open fire.



The Capuchin Friars first came to Donegal in the 1930's seeking a place to establish a house of studies for those friars training for the priesthood. Finding the "Ards Estate", then owned by the Stewart family, up for sale in an ideal location between the villages of Creeslough and Dunfanaghy, the main house and a portion of the grounds were bought and used as a seminary until the 1970's when the students were transferred to Cork and Dublin. From that time on the friary was opened up as a retreat centre offering to religious and laypeople alike



the possibility of spending time in reflection, meditation and prayer, or just taking time out to rest and recover from the pressures of everyday life.



More recently the administration of the retreat centre has been taken up by the Diocese of Raphoe with the Capuchin fraternity living in Ards continuing to offer pastoral support, hospitality and ministry to all those who visit. Whether you come for one of the wide range of programmed retreats, for a time of solitude and reflection, you will be sure of a warm Capuchin Franciscan welcome.

To book some time you can check out the Ards Friary Retreat Centre's FB page or go directly to the website at

www.ardsfriary.ie

Our Brothers in Oxford



In September Brother Antony Kurian OFM Cap., began theology studies in Blackfriars Oxford. Brother Antony was a member of the Raheny Community for the last number of years. Brother Antony joins Brother Ade Green OFM Cap. who is also in studies in Blackfriars at this time.

Blackfriars was established by the Dominican Friars in 1221 and is situated in the heart of Oxford. Today Blackfriars not alone provides training for Priests but also Philosophy and Theology courses for laypeople. There has been a Franciscan presence in Oxford since 1224 with the arrival of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa who was sent to England by St Francis of Assisi himself. Though suppressed under Henry the Eighth for some time, the Franciscan Charism has returned to the city and is well represented by both Conventual and Capuchin Franciscans.

We wish our brothers every blessing as they continue their studies.



Our Brothers in Lusaka, Zambia

On Saturday 2nd February, our brothers in Lusaka gathered in the Cathedral to mark the Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. The service was presided over by the newly installed Archbishop of Lusaka Alick Banda.

Pictured are two of our novices (on left and right); with Br. Enard Sababwa, a 2nd year Philosophy student at St. Bonaventure College and Brother Noel Brennan OFM Cap.

Divine Mercy Conference 2019

Come to visit our stand at the Divine Mercy Conference in the RDS (23rd and 24th February).

Our Vocations Team are delighted to be at the Divine Mercy Conference again this year. We will have the relics of St Pio with us at the stand so be sure to stop to say hello or for a blessing and prayer.



Archives and Heritage: African Mission Collection in the Irish Capuchin Archives

Capuchins have worked in Ireland since the seventeenth century. From the middle of the nineteenth century the Irish Capuchins manifested a missionary zeal which took them from home to the furthest corners of the globe. Irish Friars have undertaken overseas missions in the United States, Africa, New Zealand and South Korea. Over one hundred Irish Capuchins have ministered in Africa since the first Friar arrived in South Africa (1929) and in Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) in 1931. The papers of the African missionary Friars preserved in the Irish Capuchin Archives illustrate their work in parishes, and in education, health care, social development and evangelization. From the outset, the Friars sent to South Africa ministered among the marginalized black and coloured populations in Cape Town. Despite the violent political unrest provoked



[Pictured: Fr. Fintan Roche OFM Cap., Fr. Seraphin Nesdale OFM Cap., Fr. Christopher Crowley OFM Cap. and Fr. Timothy Phelim O'Shea OFM Cap. at the Loanja mission station in Northern Rhodesia, now known as Zambia, in 1932.]

by the system of racial discrimination known as apartheid the Friars continued to labour amongst the poorest in South African society. In Zambia, Irish Capuchins ministered in Barotseland, the western province of the country.

The friars arrived in the country in 1931 and initially settled in Livingstone. In what was regarded as one of the most difficult mission territories in Africa, the Capuchins experienced many hardships including the risk of malaria, the absence of permanent roads and even the threat of lions, leopards and crocodiles. The Friars also had to acquire a knowledge of the native language of Lozi.

Hospitals, leprosariums, clinics and schools were built at Capuchin mission stations throughout Zambia which served as centres of pastoral care, education, and general medical welfare. The growth of the Church in both South Africa and Zambia continues to depend upon the support of the Irish friars and co-operation with other Capuchin jurisdictions around the world. The African mission collection in the Irish Capuchins Archives includes visitation records, letters, publications, diaries and journals, maps, and a huge range of photographs relating to the many years of Irish Capuchin missionary work on the African continent.

All enquires relating to these records can be sent to:

Provincial Archivist,
Irish Capuchin Archives,
Capuchin Friary, Church Street,
Dublin 7. D07 HA22

Email: capuchinarchives@gmail.com

Tel. +353 (0) 1 873 0599



[Pictured: Irish Capuchin Friars in Cape Town, South Africa, in c. 1955.]



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