

Capuchin Connection



Welcome.

In the last issue of *Capuchin Connection* (Spring 2017), Brother Adrian our Provincial Minister highlighted the fact that since our very foundation we have been known as 'Brothers of the People'. This is a title that means a lot to us and in many ways unites our core charisms of *fraternity, minority* and *detachment* very well. These gifts provide the framework for our way of life, namely to be brothers in mission who seek to respond to the needs of others wherever they may be.

Towards the end of his life, Saint Francis of Assisi directed the Friars to be open to discovering what God wanted them to do and as a result of this, Capuchins have continued to find new and, often creative ways, to be close to the people of God.

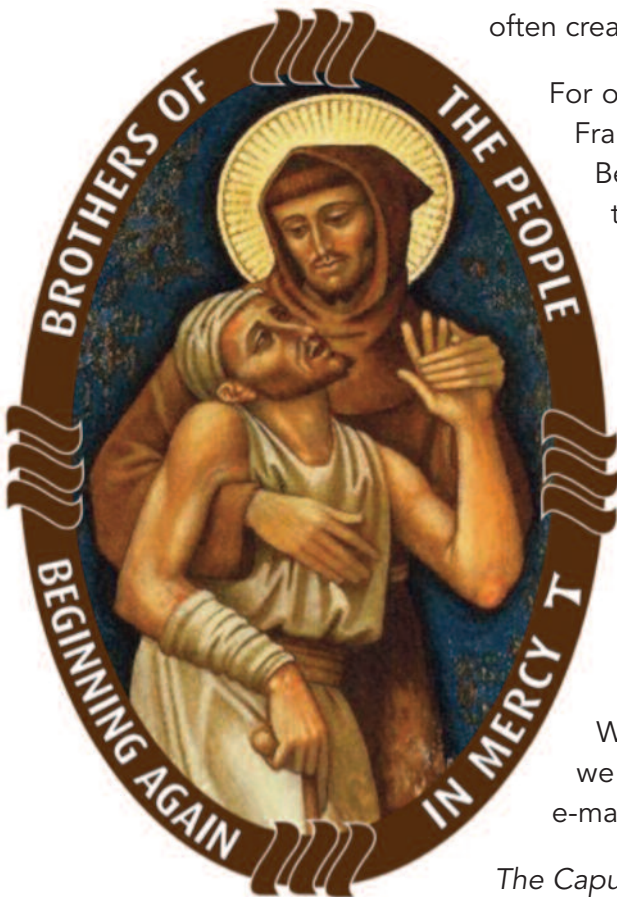
For our Chapter meeting in June 2016, we chose this image of Saint Francis embracing a leper and the title of 'Brothers of the People, Beginning again in Mercy'. This image and its meaning will serve as the focal point for our reflection up to the next chapter in 2019.

In this summer issue of *Capuchin Connection* we would like to share with you a little more about our life and charism as Brothers of the People.

Brother Sean Kelly is our Friar in Focus, sharing what Capuchin life is like for him as Provincial Vicar and Novice Master. Our Mission Secretary Brother Patrick Flynn highlights the great work of the Capuchin Mission Office in supporting our Overseas Mission Projects. We also say a very fond farewell to the Raheny Mission Project, a local organisation that has done magnificent work to support projects around the world.

We hope you enjoy reading *Capuchin Connection* and as always we are interested in your comments and feedback. Feel free to e-mail us on ofmcapcoms@gmail.com

The Capuchin Connection Team



Stained glass windows from the College Chapel of St Francis College, Rochestown, Cork

Meet the Friars: Brother Sean Kelly OFM Cap, Provincial Vicar and Novice Master

What attracted you to the Capuchins?

My first encounter with a Capuchin Friar was at a Cursillo retreat weekend in Belfast in September 1995. This Friar was Brother Sean Donohoe and he served as part of the Cursillo team and gave a number of the Spiritual Assistant talks. Apart from his testimony about what life was like as a Capuchin Friar, he brought to life the Capuchin gifts for me in the way that he helped out with cooking, serving the food, cleaning and engaging with every candidate. This was a real indication for me of what being a Friar was all about; a life of service, compassion, support and non-judgemental accompaniment, and this attracted me. Little did I think that ten years later I would be living in Belfast having this same friar as my post novitiate director.



How would you sum up what Capuchin life is all about?

Capuchin Life for me is a life of service. By means of our life of prayer and work we try our best to bring the joy of the Gospel to all. By means of our fraternal life we follow the example of St. Francis who saw the beauty of God in all creation. We endeavour to live simply, detached from many things so as to be joyfully present, especially the marginalised in today's society.

(Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.)
Matthew 25:40)

Tell us a little bit about what your life is like as Novice Master...

Firstly, it's a very humbling experience. It allows me to journey with young men who are discerning their own futures as Capuchin Friars. It reminds me of my time of discernment and all the joys and the struggles that came with it. Through classes on spirituality, human development, Franciscan studies as well as our prayer life, work and recreation they begin to more deeply discern where God is leading them. I'm in awe at the responsibility but reassured that there is no such thing as failure; success comes in accompanying them to make the right decision.

What have been some of the highlights of your life as a Capuchin Friar?

There have been so many highlights in my life as a Capuchin Friar. I entered the Order at the age of 42 and the first highlight was receiving the Capuchin Habit. Succeeding at the studies alongside my Solemn Profession in 2008 and ordination as Capuchin priest in my home parish of Ballinamore, Co Leitrim have been big highlights. I have been deeply touched by so many people especially by their faith life in times of terminal illness. To be with people who tell me they are ready to meet God and have no fear of dying inspires me in my own faith life. When I asked a very close friend who was dying from cancer and who had asked me to officiate his funeral Mass, what he would like me to say to the congregation in my homily, he said "Simply tell them that God is good. He will never let them down. There is nothing to fear." If I did nothing else in my life as Capuchin but witness to that special message then I would be a good Capuchin Friar.

What advice would you give to anyone considering a vocation today?

I think the first thing I would say is don't ignore it. Allow the internal whisperings to surface and respond accordingly. Pray about it and do make contact with a Vocations Promoter who will listen to you and help you discern your next step. And remember the words of my friend, "God is good. He will never let them down. There is nothing to fear."

If you feel inspired by Brother Sean's story and would like to know more about the Capuchin way of life, contact our Vocation Promoter Brother Martin by emailing capuchinvocation@gmail.com

Brothers in Mission: Capuchin Mission Office and Mission Apostolate



My name is Patrick Flynn, a Capuchin friar, and I am the Mission Secretary to the Irish Province. My duty is to promote our Overseas Missions. It is a labour of love as I spent the earlier part of my priestly life working in Zambia and South Africa. One of the great blessings and success stories of our Irish Province has been the development of our missions to Zambia, South Africa, South Korea, New Zealand and North America. Through the whole of the last century, and continuing up to the present day, the friars have laboured in these lands spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It has been a labour of love, toil and rich rewards. Many of the friars died in these lands, worn out by their labours. They were generous

men; men of faith, and God alone knows the good they did throughout their lives. They were inspirational men, men of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Every church, school, hospital, leprosarium, clinic, house, friary that was built over the years was made possible by the very generous contributions to our Missions by the people of Ireland and beyond. We have always totally depended on your generous contributions. All you good people who have in the past, and continue today to support our Missionary Mass Association (the Seraphic Mass Association) have made a huge contribution to the ongoing work of our Missionary work. I wish to thank you for your wonderful support and generosity. I wish to thank, especially, all our promoters of the Missionary Mass Association for their loyalty, generosity and the time they have given to promoting our missionary work. So many loyal promoters, up and down the country, who have given of their time in promoting our work. The truth is that our missions could not have survived without your support. You have been the backbone of all our fundraising and we wish to say, today, thank you.



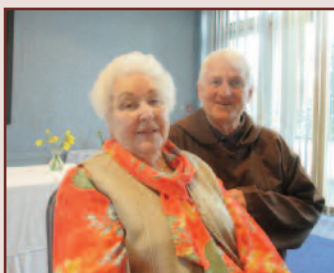
International Missionary Conference

From the 1st to the 5th of May'17 the Mission Secretaries of nine of the countries of Western Europe gathered at the Emmaus Conference Centre, Swords, Co Dublin for their annual conference. The purpose of the meeting was to promote theological reflection on the mission of the Church and the specific contribution of the Capuchins to the spread of the Gospel. It was a period of sharing information and experiences from the various provinces. Our reflections on the contemporary situation in Europe, and in our missionary territories, helped us to discern the "signs of the times" and our current challenges. We noted the changes that have taken place in our respective countries over the past decades due to immigration, asylum seekers and refugees. The question is how do we as a Church respond to these challenges and what support can we render these people? Very frequently, the people that we served and ministered to in their countries are now on our doorsteps and what should we be doing now to help them? This has to be an ongoing conversation and questions are raised that call for answers.

Capuchins continue to reach out to those in need across Europe as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers continues to develop.



A heartfelt thank you to the Raheny Missionary Project



It is with great pride and some regret that after 36 years we lowered the curtain on the Raheny Missionary Project. Many of us look back with gratitude on the friendship and support cultivated as the group worked together for all those years as we planned our support for so many deserving projects. Most gratifying of all is the fact that we raised almost a half million Euro and have also helped when disasters struck Zambia, Namibia, Liberia, Venezuela, New Orleans, Ethiopia, West Indies, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, and the Philippines - and a few months ago, Italy. We also kept our eye on the local situation and have come to the aid of the homeless in Dublin by supporting the work of Focus Ireland and the Capuchin Day Centre. Our final co-operative effort was with a Mercy Sister from Meath who pioneered a project that provides services for people with failing sight or blindness, in Linda Compound, Lusaka.

We celebrated the closing of the Project with Holy Mass. After Mass we gathered to share the stories of our time together and we raised a glass to remember those who shared in our work over the years. We now look forward to welcoming a new chapter in all our lives.

Mrs Pat Breslin (on behalf of the Raheny Missionary Project)



The Capuchin Friars have had a presence in Ard Mhuire since the 1930's and today Ards offers a full range of retreats throughout the year both private and directed. The Retreat Centre lies on the Wild Atlantic Way and is nestled in 200km of woodland on the shores of Sheephaven Bay. The Centre is run by the Diocese of Raphoe with the support and presence of the Capuchin Friars. The extensive grounds offer a range of woodland walks and scenic views of the shore with the hills of Donegal as a backdrop. Check out their website to find out more: www.ardsfriary.ie

Holy Trinity Choir, Cork.

The choir of Holy Trinity Capuchin Church on Father Mathew Quay Cork have been enhancing the Sunday liturgy for many years. Members of the choir are pictured here with Brother John Hickey, Brother Michael Burgess and Brother Dermot Lynch. The choir sing at 11am Mass in Holy Trinity every Sunday. All are welcome.



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