

# On The Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

## More About Ireland Trip

Mid-afternoon Saturday, August 19, our Courier Journal Group of 33



Fr. Cuddy

landed at Shannon Air Port for seven days of meeting the Irish and viewing a part of the country: Limerick, Killarney, Kilkenny, ending with three nights in Dublin. A pert Miss Collette Murray, our Courier was on hand to welcome and guide us. A fine bus driver, Vincent Kearns, was there with a handsome bus, and he put all 36 pieces of luggage in the baggage compartment. The first female Courier we ever had was a Katrina Shaughnessy (pronounced "shock-nessy") who was a pearl of great price. She and Steve Riley (RIP) and his wife Harriet of St. Anne's became great friends. Katrina has since married an Irish charmer, John Flanagan, and both were at the Shannon to welcome Mrs. Riley and daughter Sister Stephanie of St. Stanislaus School.

We were whisked to Shannon Shamrock Inn, a nice motel adjacent to Bunratty Castle, about 8 miles from the Air Port. Our rooms were ready, so most took a hot shower or tub, and rested until 6:00 P.M. Then a five minute walk to adjoining Bunratty Folk Barn on the Castle grounds for a traditional Irish Celi: dinner, music,

dancing and story telling. The dinner was sumptuous: tossed salad, Irish stew, homemade Irish wheat-bread and butter, olives, apple Tart, Irish cheese and tea. Wine and soft drinks were also served.

Next to Bunratty Castle is a famous pub: "Durdy Nellie's." The legend is that Nellie ran the pub with no exaggerated notions of hygiene. The floor had sawdust to absorb the spittle of the customers. The glasses were used over and over with no taint from soap or water. The clientele was a happy group of Irish males who gathered to drink, to talk, and to debate the relative merits of the County soccer teams.

There is a story which no one believes but which does give a bit of the spirit of the original pub. A habitue complained: "Nellie, there's a dead mouse in my stout." Nellie looked. "And so there is", and extracting the mouse, dropped in on the floor and returned to her serving. "Nellie, aren't you going to give me a fresh glass of stout?" said the habitue. "Ah, wurrah: First you complain because there is a mouse in your stout. Now you complain because there isn't. Drink up your stout and be quiet." Capitalizing on the legends around the pub, shrewd business men have bought the place, and affecting the rudeness of the original pub, serve sandwiches and drinks, but with proper regard for hygiene.

As we were leaving

Bunratty I said to some: "I know you are tired, but you should at least look into Durty Nellie's. It's historic." And I led the way. There are benches in front, and I saw two Limerick boys sitting sipping Guinness Stout. I sat down with them, introducing myself as "a priest from Rochester, New York." After the usual amenities I asked: "And what is the state of the Faith with lads your age?" The response was sad. Both are 19 years old. There is a group of 12 who hang around together. And with the whole dozen, no Mass, no interest in the Church. Not hostile, but as Sean put it: "I suppose we're just indifferent. When we first started to skip Mass it bothered us. But not now." Colm smiled: "Maybe it's our age."

I asked: "What's your religious background?" Sean replied: "About all we learned we got in elementary school. We went to the Jesuit High in Limerick but all of us considered the religion classes as a kind of 'ease time' between math and important subjects." Between themselves they discussed the classes of two Jesuits who taught religion. One was discounted as "an easy going, nice priest, but ineffective. He just conducted discussion. We learned nothing." The other they granted had given them some substance, but evidently little inspiration.

The sorrow to my soul is that these are the men who should be ablaze to promote the Kingdom of God. The boys were cordial and easy with me, and I with them. I took

their names and addresses and promised to send them some things to read. One will be "Damien, the Leper" by John Farrow. Our youth need challenge. They promised to read them.

In my solicitude about the Faith of the youth, I had clean forgotten the party I had escorted to see the pub; but found they had taken a quick and startled glance, and retreated to the motel which is less than five minutes away.

There had been no opportunity for Mass so at 9:30 P.M. I celebrated that Holy Worship in my room, and plopped into bed at 10:30, weary but happy.

Next week: To Tralee, Killarney and Cashel.



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# Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

## Saints Are Not Perfect

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 18:21-35. (R1) Sir. 27:30-28:7. (R2) Rom. 14:7-9.

I was amused and surprised last year after I had finished a course with



Fr. Shamon

the eighth grade on Heroes to Follow. It was a study of six saints: St. Theresa of Lisieux, St. Jerome, St. Francis Xavier, John XXIII (a hopeful one for sainthood), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and St. Francis of Assisi. The surprise and amusement came when I asked the class which saint they loved best. Unanimously, they voted for St. Jerome.

I had presented St. Jerome as "the man with a terrible temper." Jerome was not a likeable person. His towering temper made him a difficult friend. Even in his isolated hut in Bethlehem, he managed to provoke quarrels with other monks. When a monk died with whom he had been feuding, Jerome

called him "a dead scorpion," and said he was glad he was dead.

When St. Augustine questioned the importance of Jerome's translation of the Old Testament, Jerome lost his temper and verbally tore Augustine to shreds. Poor Augustine literally had to eat crow to be reconciled with Jerome.

When Jerome got mad, he spewed out such a torrent of abusive and acidic words that many people called him "The Scourge of the Desert."

Jerome, of course, understood the truth of his temper problem and it humbled him. He wrote to a friend that he had no heart of iron, but one of flesh in his breast. Even as an old man he realized he had little self-control. This weakness was a source of sorrow and of humility to him. His penances were inflicted on himself in part to help control his temper. He never completely succeeded.

Jerome was voted by the students as their favorite saint because they could relate to him. I never realized the seething tempests in so many little teapots. But I guess eighth-graders have a struggle with their tempers.

everybody trying to tell them how to run their lives. Jerome, they felt, taught them that people with personality problems, especially with one which they all seem to have, could become a saint. It was a revelation to them. The other saints they admired; Jerome, they could identify with.

The Sunday readings deal with anger and forgiveness. I guess this is everybody's problem: getting mad and then trying to forgive and forget. It's not easy. "Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight." (R1)

After a year of exposure to the meek and gentle Christ, Peter had come a long way. "Lord, when my brother wrongs me how often must I forgive him? Seven times?" Peter thought he was being over-generous. But he still had a long way to go. "I say, seventy times, seven times." Eventually, Peter made it, as did St. Jerome.

Saints aren't perfect people. They are simply people struggling to become perfect. The difference between saints and sinners is that the saints try! Saints weren't born on stained glass windows—they had to fight to get there. A saint is a sinner who keeps on trying.

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