

THE LEGION OF MARY SCHOOL FOR SAINTS

by Rev. Msgr. Thomas B. Falls, S.T.D., Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Yes, the Legion of Mary is truly a school for saints. In fact, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that some members of the Legion of Mary will actually be canonized saints, if not in this century, certainly in the next.

The Legion of Mary is not yet seventyfive years old, yet three of its members are now being considered for possible canonization.

Edel Quinn, who died in 1944, is probably closest to becoming a saint in our time, since she has been declared Venerable on December 31, 1994, by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II.

Alphonsus (Alfie) Lambe was an Irish Envoy to South America where he worked to spread the Legion of Mary for some six years until his death in 1959. In 1971, twelve years after his death, his cause for canonization was opened in Rome at the request of many South American bishops.

Mr. Frank Duff, the saintly founder of the Legion of Mary, died in 1980. The Diocesan Process of Canonization was opened in Dublin in 1989.

These are the three saintly legionaries featured in this pamphlet.

EDEL MARY QUINN

Edel Mary Quinn was born in Ireland, at Greenane, near Kanturk, a remote town in County Cork, on September 14, 1907. I like to point out how modern a saint Edel would be by saying that if she were alive today, she would be 2 months and 12 days older than I am.

Her father, Charles Quinn, from County Galway, was in the banking business; her mother, whose maiden name was Louise Burke Browne, was from Clare. Edel Mary was the first-born in the family of three other girls, Leslie, Mona and Dorothea, and one brother, Raphael.

There is an interesting story of how Edel received the name Edel at her baptism. It is said that her mother had chosen the name Adele after one of her own sisters. At the baptismal service in the parish church Mr. Quinn was asked the baby's name by the priest. Mr. Quinn faithfully expressed his wife's wish by answering in his thick Irish brogue: Adele, with the accent on the second syllable. The priest however understood "Edel", thinking they had chosen the name "Edel" as a shortened form of Edelweiss - the beautiful mountain flower. Edel, however, was never quite pleased with her name. She often joked about it.

From her earliest years Edel was a very happy child, and ever so happy when she received Holy Communion for the first time. As a school-girl Edel was a serious student, but at the same time a care-free, joyous and fun-loving girl. She always presented a happy exterior, never giving any outward signs of inward worry.

She showed a mature poise in all her actions, even in her early years. Nothing seemed to bother her: she was fearless, totally unselfish, forgetting herself entirely in helping others. Her grace and charm impressed everyone and in her relationship with her superiors she displayed a properly balanced degree of ease and respect. She had a great sense of humor and was actually a prankster! Her laughter was contagious and her smile (everyone

who knew her spoke of her beautiful smile) was mischievous and gentle. Frank Duff once said that photographs never did justice to Edel's beauty. He said a camera could catch some features of her external beauty, but not her real inner beauty which radiated through her beautiful blue eyes, her expressive lips and her knowing smile.

As a teenager Edel was very interested in sports. She was captain of her school's cricket team and liked tennis, golf and swimming. She was quite fond of music, played the piano and was an excellent singer and dancer. And she dressed in style, but with modesty. Yes, Edel was one beautifully accomplished girl - a girl of our times.

After her school days were over, Edel worked as a secretary in a tile company in Dublin. When her employer fell in love with her and proposed marriage, she was surprised, but she refused his offer by explaining to him that she had already promised herself to God through the Religious Life.

Indeed Edel in her choice of Religious Life had chosen the most difficult - the cloistered life. In fact, Edel had been accepted by the religious community of the Poor Clare Sisters and was waiting until her family could spare her. As she was preparing herself for the convent Edel discovered the Legion of Mary - and she loved it.

After a couple of years in the Legion she was appointed president of a praesidium devoted to the care of street girls. In spite of her youth (she was around 20 years of age) she eventually gained the respect and admiration of the older members of that praesidium, and rightly so, for she was an exemplary Legionary in every sense of the word.

During her immediate preparations for entering the convent, Edel became ill with tuberculosis and was confined to a sanatorium for eighteen months. As her disease was diagnosed "incurable" she left the sanatorium and got another job as secretary in order to help alleviate the pressing needs of her family.

She immediately returned to the Legion of Mary and after about five years joined a vacation extension team sent to Wales, England. She was so impressed by the need of the Legion in Wales that she volunteered to return there, to get a job, settle in and continue to extend the Legion in that area.

Instead of sending her to Wales, the Concilium officers asked her if she would be willing to go to Africa as a Legion Envoy. Without the slightest hesitation and with great joy she agreed. After all the objections to her being sent to Africa in questionable health were set aside, Edel set sail in October of 1936, leaving her family and friends, knowing she would never see them again.

The frail young lady of 29 years, in spite of her illness, performed superhuman wonders in the mission field for over seven years. The bishops were anxious for Edel to set up branches of the Legion in their territories. Many priests and nuns told her that the Legion of Mary would not work in Africa. But with her never failing persistence she finally showed them that it would work there and it did. It became the greatest aid to the bishops, priests and sisters in their missionary work.

What won everyone to Edel's side were her gentle smile, her shining blue eyes, her great sense of humor, her complete naturalness, her constant charm of manner, and her readiness to undertake the hardest of tasks, working in the heat and dust and mud long after the others were taking their muchneeded afternoon siesta. Edel was always respectful of ecclesiastical authority. If there was a difference of opinion she was strongwilled, but always the soul of conciliation; but when there was a question of the following the Legion rules as outlined in the Handbook she was inflexible.

In setting up and revisiting hundreds of praesidia, curiae and comitia, Edel travelled hundreds and hundreds of miles by ship, by train, by bus, by car and truck, by bicycle, by rickshaw, or by foot - and always at the price of great physical pain and discomfort.

Shortly before the final stage of her illness she travelled eighteen hours one way by train to visit Legion praesidia and curiae.

The area that she actually covered in Africa during her mission there was wider than all of Europe.

When Edel died in Nairobi, Kenya, on May 12, 1944 at the age of thirty-six, the bishops, priests, sisters and laity who knew her were convinced that they had had a saint in their midst for almost eight wonderful years.

Consequently, in 1952 Bishop McCarthy and many other bishops asked Rome to open the Cause for the Canonization of Edel. Since that time the process has been progressing steadily and well - so well that she now has the title of Venerable.

CONCILIUM LEGIONIS MARIAE
DE MONTFORT HOUSE MORNING STAR AVENUE BRUNSWICK STREET DUBLIN 7 IRELAND
31st December 1994 Edel Quinn Now Venerable

The Pope has confirmed a vote of the Cardinals and Archbishops of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints affirming the outstanding holiness of Edel Quinn, the Legion of Mary envoy who died in Nairobi in 1944. She is now given the title Venerable. One miracle, attributed to her intercession, is still required for her beatification. If an adequately attested miracle is forthcoming the beatification should follow quickly. The Pope has asked the Congregation to give priority, as far as possible, to processing the Causes of lay people.

What are the virtues and qualities that marked Edel as a holy person fit for Canonization? Why was she so different from others of her time who may have been holy persons yet were not mentioned for Canonization? What were some of her virtues which made her so different?

Everyone who knew her, including her parents, her three sisters and a brother, describe Edel as having been totally unselfish, giving herself to others without consideration of herself. Edel had a concern for everyone and shared in their sufferings, but never revealed her own. She was truly patient in her suffering, which was considerable, but she never gave evidence of pain or worryment. She was always cheerful, even when she was in intense pain or extreme discomfort.

Those persons who knew her speak of her natural simplicity, her generosity, and her fearlessness. To Edel her Legion work was sacred. With an extraordinary ability to organize, she gave her time, her talents and her toil to the Legion, without ever counting the cost. But you might say, is that all that set her apart as a candidate for official sainthood? We know that there has to be more than all the above virtues and qualities.

One of the virtues that will help Edel towards Canonization was her extraordinary love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. Any day that she could not attend Mass and receive her Lord in Holy Communion was considered by her as incomplete - as a lost day. Her greatest joy of the day was to be in union with her God in Holy Communion.

A Poem by Edel Quinn (Found in a notebook from her boardingschool days)

*Come my Jesus, I am waiting waiting for you here full of love and ardent longing banishing all fear.
Not an angel or Thy Mother could content me now: none can satisfy my craving Jesus! only
Thou...
Come today and come tomorrow come each dawning day while the flood of life is flowing, till it ebb
away till my heart be still forever till my voice be dumb; then with open arms to meet me come Lord
Jesus, come!*

Another virtue that would be stressed in the process of her cause was that of her living in the presence of the Blessed Trinity and of Mary every moment of the day. Frank Duff tells us that Edel's every thought, word and deed were activated by highly spiritual motives. In other words, all of Edel's thoughts, words and actions were the thoughts, words and actions that Jesus and Mary would have had under similar circumstances. Some of Edel's friends have testified that in unguarded moments, especially at Legion meetings, they would notice her

lips moving, probably as she uttered some prayers to God and Mary. These friends cite this as a proof of her constant awareness of the presence of God, and of her constant union with Jesus and Mary.

I believe that this particular facet of Edel's spirituality shows us that the secret of Edel's sanctity came from St. Louis Marie De Montfort's "Secret of Mary", for Edel followed De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary as very few persons ever have. As a legionary in Ireland and as an envoy in Africa, Edel always recommended to her legionaries the reading and the following of De Montfort's "Secret of Mary". After her death in Africa her personal belongings were sent back to Ireland in her battered trunk, and two books in that trunk were the Handbook and the "Secret of Mary".

One final reason that Rome may find compelling for Edel's canonization is what she has done for the Catholic Church. On this subject Frank Duff has written: "Out of her physical wreckage and her short life (of nearly 37 years) Edel Quinn fashioned an achievement which can rank with any of the epics of the past, but which is bigger than common history for it helped to build the Catholic Church".

Edel helped to build the Catholic Church in Africa through her work with the Legion of Mary. Before Edel's arrival in Africa the image of the Church there was that of an unstable church. Conversions of native Africans were numerous enough but they were not lasting, for many of the new converts often fell back into paganism after a few months in the church. But Edel and her legionaries changed that image of instability. Edel did tMs by training her native legionaries to go out every week and pull the lapsed Catholics back into the Church, and then by repeated visits to keep them in the church.

Archbishop (later Cardinal) Antonio Riberi as Apostolic Delegate to British East Africa saw what Edel and her native legionaries did for the Church in Africa. When he arrived in Peking, China, as Apostolic Delegate, his first move was to have the Legion of Mary set up in every Chinese village, and he appointed Father Aedan McGrath, who was then a missionary in China, to do this. When Archbishop Riberi saw how Father McGrath was setting up the Legion of Mary in so many towns and villages in China, he made this great statement: "Edel Quinn changed the face of the Church in Africa and saved the Church in China". Isn't this enough for Edel's canonization? I think so.

"THANKS TO EDEL"

Some of the favors attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God Edel Quinn

Edel on O'Connell Bridge

In the course of her office work in Dublin Edel Quinn met and befriended a young married woman who had a lot of domestic and financial trouble. Edel was a constant source of strength and encouragement and also of material help:

"I could write a book on all that she did for me and my family," wrote the friend later. When Edel left for Africa she missed her greatly, and though she did not forget Edel's assurance that God was with her in her suffering she frequently became very down-hearted.

One day, in May 1944 Edel's friend was crossing O'Connell Bridge in a state of such deep depression that the sight of the river suggested the thought of doing away with herself. Then suddenly she saw Edel standing on the pavement a short distance ahead. She saw her quite clearly and was certain of her identity.

She was about to approach her when her attention was momentarily distracted and when she looked again there was no sign of Edel. She was puzzled but thought that Edel mustn't have seen her and had moved away in the crowd of pedestrians. Disappointed, but thrilled by the fact that Edel was back in Dublin she went home and told the good news to her husband.

Two days later she read in a newspaper that Edel had died in Nairobi shortly before she had seen her, as she firmly believed, on O'Connell Bridge.

From then on she constantly prayed to her and received many blessings which she attributed to her intercession. Among these was the conversion of a close relative who had seemingly lost the faith and obstinately refused to see a priest even on his deathbed. She besged Edel to intercede for him and almost immediately he spontaneously asked for a priest and died in peace with God.

In her old age, Edel's friend gave an impression of great peace and happiness and loved to talk about Edel Quinn's holiness, and her kindness to herself and her family.

(Ireland)

Edel Forestalls the Surgeon

In October 1988, Mademoiselle X underwent a major operation for an abdominal tumor in a French hospital. Following the operation, an ulcer (fistula) formed on the pancreas, with continuing discharge of pus. The patient was extremely ill, suffering great pain and frequent vomiting. Unable to eat or drink, she had to be fed artificially.

Things went on like this for six weeks and then the surgeon (a professor of surgery) informed her that, as the ulcer showed no signs of healing, another operation would be necessary. Mlle. X pleaded that she was too weak to face up to further surgery. However, on the surgeon's insistence that it was her only hope of recovery, she agreed to the operation and it was fixed for the two days later.

During her stay in hospital, Mlle. X had learned about Edel Quinn from some Legion of Mary visitors from whom she also received a prayer leaflet. The legionaries joined with her in earnest prayer for a cure through Edel's intercession.

She herself had great confidence in Edel's power with God and kept calling on her day and night, and now all the more earnestly with the operation so near. Then the extraordinary thing happened.

On the morning of the day preceding that fixed for the operation, she felt vastly improved and examination disclosed that the recalcitrant ulcer had healed overnight. The surgeon came to visit her and when he saw her new condition he exclaimed, "This is fantastic, it is a miracle! This is the best gift you could give me" (alluding, apparent, to his imminent departure to take up a post overseas). After this spontaneous reaction, he added that two years of non-recurrence would be needed before the cure could be confirmed.

The proposed operation never took place and Mlle. X's general health steadily improved. At the end of 1990 she underwent a thorough medical examination which resulted in an excellent report.

(France)

Blind Child Receives His Sight

Not long after the birth of a little boy his parents observed that he gave no sign of being able to see. A few months passed and now seriously worried, they consulted a doctor who confirmed that there was absolutely no response to light. They then took the child to a specialist who examined him very thoroughly and declared that the child, in his opinion, was suffering from incurable blindness; there was no trace of an optic nerve. The parents were in great distress. A few days later they went to visit some friends in Ireland and brought the child with them. One of the friends advised them to have recourse to Edel Quinn on the little boy's behalf, and introduced them to a priest who had a relic of Edel in his possession. At the parents' request, the priest blessed the child with the relic praying that, through the intercession of Edel Quinn, he might be given his sight. The next day, to the amazement and joy of the parents, the child seemed to be following some moving object with his eyes. Subsequent days made it perfectly obvious that he was able to see. It was some weeks before the parents were able to bring him back to the specialist. The specialist was completely astonished when, on examination,

he found the child's eyes perfectly normal. He said he couldn't understand how he had failed to detect the optic nerve on the previous occasion. He suggested that perhaps there had been a delayed development of the nerve but didn't offer any explanation of the fact of the whole process taking place so suddenly. The parents were quite satisfied with their own explanation and remain full of gratitude to Edel Quinn. (s.r)

Completely Unexpected Cure of Severe Ulcer

Following a superficial injury, Fr. Robert Hilton, a priest on the teaching staff of an English seminary, developed a very bad ulcer on the side of his knee which steadily grew worse in spite of careful treatment in hospital and in the infirmary of the seminary.

At the end of three months a nurse who dressed the ulcer described it as "very angry and like a real hole in the knee." Three months later a different witness said it was "a deep hole into which one could put one's finger; the wound was full of pus and very raw. The doctor described it then as being "one and a half inches in diameter with a sloughing base extending to the lower tissues;" he warned that it would take a long time to heal. The ward sister of a hospital where the priest spent some weeks, also at that time, was fully convinced that the ulcer would take perhaps up to a year to heal if, indeed, it ever healed. The patient left the hospital to be cared for by the very competent infirmarian of the seminary, a religious sister. A few days later, seeing that the ulcer had defied all medical treatment and was continuing to deteriorate, she began to pray earnestly for a cure through the intercession of Edel Quinn, and was wholeheartedly joined in her prayer by Fr. Hilton himself. Very soon after the start of this prayer the ulcer began to show improvement and within two weeks the heavy discharge of pus had completely ceased while the ulcer was seen to be healing from the base deep down. The prayers continued and each day showed a further improvement. By another ten days the ulcer was completely healed. The doctor subsequently made a statement describing the cure as a most extraordinary phenomenon and entirely unexpected. He was personally convinced that the cure should be attributed to the invocation of Edel Quinn and not to the medical treatment which, in this case, had proved of so little avail. (U.K)

Cure of Nervous Disorder

A Dublin client of Edel writes: "I wish to state that for the past ten years I have prayed solely to Edel Quinn to intercede with Almighty God for a close relative now in her fifties who had suffered a succession of nervous breakdowns and mental illness, was unable to hold any employment or face any responsibility for very long without deteriorating.

Since the start of praying this relative not only has improved so much but has twice been promoted at work in those ten years.

I have recently started praying for three other people I know who have had breakdowns and they are all making remarkable recovery so far. I am so grateful to Edel Quinn for the intercession to Almighty God and His wonderful answers to my prayer." (Ireland)

Man Suddenly Hears After Years of Deafness

"I wish to inform the Legion of my remarkable hearing recovery, which I attribute to the intercession of Edel Quinn. Previous to my experience I had been deaf for many years and found it necessary to wear a hearing aid.

During the year, I became interested in the life story of Edel and decided to offer up a Novena that she would intercede and cure my loss of hearing - this she did.

On August 4 last, while watching television, my hearing aid suddenly failed to function. On pulling it out, I discovered that I could hear very clearly. The aid was no longer necessary. There is absolutely no medical explanation. All this I owe to Edel Quinn." (Ireland)

Hand Saved from Amputation

A Dublin man writes: "A friend of mine received a bad cut in his hand with an electric saw. It had been stitched but when the stitches were removed the cut opened again. The hand became swollen and black and there was a very bad odour from it. The doctor said he would have to amputate. I called to see my friend who had resigned himself to amputation. I suggested that we start a novena to Edel Quinn and promised to lend him Edel's relic which was then on loan to someone else. We started the novena that night. The next day he was due to see the doctor and arrange to go into hospital. On his way up to the Mater Hospital he says he suddenly felt light and as if he had enormous strength. When the bandage was removed the swelling, blackness and odour had disappeared and there was no talk of amputation. He continued to improve and although he expected to have an ugly finger, it is back to normal. We believe this to be Edel's doing." (Dublin)

A Vocation Saved in Thailand

"On the day of the Mass commemoration of Edel Quinn a sister from the Congregation handed in a letter to the Superior General expressing her desire to leave the convent for good. The latter accepted the letter and had a talk with the sister. Everything was set for her departure but the Superior asked her to think again before leaving. The Superior placed the letter under the portrait of Edel Quinn and asked her for her intercession to change the mind of the sister. On May 12 (Edel's anniversary) the sister returned to the Superior and withdrew her resignation. So she is back in the Congregation and has promised to stay for good." (Thailand)

Prayer for the Intercession of Venerable Edel Quinn

Eternal Father, I thank you for the grace you gave to your servant, Edel Quinn, of striving to live always in the joy of your presence, for the radiant charity infused into her heart by your Holy Spirit, and for the strength she drew from the Bread of Life to labor until death for the glory of your name, in loving dependence on Mary, Mother of the Church.

Confident, O Merciful Father, that her life was pleasing to you, I beg you to grant me, through her intercession, the special favor I now implore ... and to make known by miracles the glory she enjoys in Heaven, so that she may be glorified also by your Church on earth, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

We place our petition in the hands of Mary to whom Edel turned in every need. Hail Mary...

(With Ecclesiastical approval)

Favors attributed to the intercession of Edel Quinn should be reported to:
LEGION OF MARY, DE MONTFORT HOUSE, BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN 7, IRELAND.

FRANK DUFF

Frank Duff, the saintly founder of the Legion of Mary, which he always considered to be a school for sanctity, took the De Montfort Way of True Devotion to Jesus through Mary as the basis of Legion Marian spirituality which he expounded in the official Legion Handbook. In following this De Montfort Way to sanctity, he became a person whose cause for Beatification is now being studied in Dublin, and will one day be opened in Rome.

Frank Duff became acquainted with St. Louis Marie De Montfort's "Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed

Virgin" long before he founded the Legion of Mary, and it can be said that he grasped the deep theological basis of the De Montfort Way as no one else of his time, and he lived it every moment of his life. It was the key to his holiness.

1. Here are some indications of Frank Duff's personal holiness:
2. He lived in the constant presence of the Blessed Trinity.
3. He had an intense love of Jesus in the Eucharist; attendance at Holy Mass and the reception of Holy Communion were essential parts of his daily life.
4. He led a life of close union with Mary, the Mother of God.
5. He possessed a deeply inspired knowledge of God and of Catholic theology.
6. He had a warm love for the Church, for the Pope, and for the priests.
7. He was greatly respected for his deep humility and shy, quiet reserve.
8. He led a most simple, frugal life. (His bedroom had the barest of furniture. He had no automobile or chauffeur. He travelled around Dublin on his bicycle, even when he was almost 90 years old.)

But, you may say, is this enough for canonization? Perhaps not, but what I have to say now may give an answer to that question, for I have enjoyed a close friendship with Frank Duff from the beginning of 1962 until his death in 1980.

In November of 1961 I was asked by Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, to become the Spiritual Director of the Legion of Mary in the Archdiocese. Knowing very little of the Legion of Mary, I travelled to Dublin in June of 1962 to learn first hand more about the Legion. There I met Frank Duff for the first time. This was the beginning of a long and fruitful association with that saintly man until his death in 1980 - a period of eighteen years.

Our friendship developed as I made many subsequent trips to Dublin. When I could not get to Dublin, we corresponded by mail, exchanging letters every month or so. By now I had no doubt that I had a saint for a personal friend. I realized that he was not only endowed with the ordinary gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, but also with that extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit - the gift of healing, not only of spiritual healing, but also of physical healing. Monsignor Albert Norrell can testify to that.

Al Norrell told me that on one of his many visits to Dublin as an Active member of the Legion to see Mr. Duff, he became so sick that he had to be taken to the hospital, where, upon examination it was determined that he would need immediate surgery. Frank visited Al the evening before, and asked him what was wrong. When Al told him of the great pain he was in, and how they were to operate on him the next day, Frank said to Al: "there is no need for an operation. You have nothing wrong with you; get dressed and we will leave now. Al dressed and left with Frank. The pain left him immediately and never returned - Al was perfectly well.

On another occasion Frank showed me his bedroom and told me how the devil tried to knock him out of bed, and even tried to harm him when he was shaving by pushing his arm which was holding the razor. He said that he just laughed at the devil whom he called "the old boy.

We became the closest of friends in 1965, the last year of the General Council Vatican II. We spent three months at Rome during the Council, he as lay observer and I as pastor observer. We were together at every meeting of the Council which was held in St. Peter's Basilica. At one of the early meetings Cardinal Heenan of England, while he had the floor, announced to the 2300 bishops that they had the pleasure of having present the founder of the Legion of Mary, Mr. Frank Duff. There was a standing ovation and while the bishops applauded, Frank Duff bowed his head and blushed. I know, I was there, just two rows in front of him, looking back to see him as I applauded with the rest.

As a result of this introduction, each morning, before the Council started, there was a long line of bishops, mostly from missionary countries, lined up to talk with Frank. Since I was there every morning, some bishops thought that I might be Frank's private chaplain, and they would ask if I could set up an appointment that would enable

them to talk to him at length. They were all so anxious to talk to him about their missions and how the Legion of Mary could and did help them.

With the closing of the Council Frank returned to Dublin where his voluminous mail awaited him. From Dublin he guided his Legion in every part of the world. He continued to live a daily life of close union with the Three Divine Persons and with Mary. His constant awareness of this union gave him a serenity and peace of mind that could not be shaken. This does not mean that Frank did not suffer! Like every saint Frank had his periods of trial and suffering - especially mental suffering. He suffered much over the growth and set-backs of the Legion worldwide. In one major country the bishops there saw the success of the Legion of Mary all over the world, especially in the missionary countries, and felt they could improve it by having it under their control. Frank heard that to do this, these bishops were sending to the Pope a delegation, headed by a distinguished Cardinal (a Papal Secretary of State, no less!) to ask the Pope to change the headquarters of the Legion of Mary from Dublin to their country. Frank sent an eight-page letter (a copy of which he sent to me) to the Holy Father, asking that the administration of the Legion stay as it is, in Dublin. Frank happily sent me a letter telling me that the Pope told the visiting bishops to go home - because there would be no change in the administration of the Legion.

I would think that when Frank's cause for canonization is started at Rome, the officials will find a chief reason to be what he did for the good of the Church by founding the Legion of Mary. They will become aware of the fact that the Legion of Mary is a worldwide lay apostolic organization of nearly three million Active members and over twelve million Auxiliary or praying members. They will realize that Frank Duff was the founder of a proven movement for the Church's mission of evangelization. My feeling is that Frank Duff when he is canonized should be listed with the saintly founders of Religious Orders, whose memobryis perpetualized in Saint Peter's in Rome y huge statues all lined up on both sides of the lengthy nave of the Basilica.

Yes, I like to visualize the statue of Frank Duff in Saint Peter's, in line with the statues of St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, St. Bruno, St. Ignatius Loyola, and St. Louis Marie De Montfort - Frank's favorite saint and tutor. I like to dream of the time in the next century when legionaries of Mary will be able to enter Saint Peter's Basilica and gaze up at the statue of "Saint Frank Duff".

Prayer for the Beatification of Servant of God Frank Duff

God our Father, You inspired your servant Frank Duff with a profound insight into the mystery of your Church, the Body of Christ, and of the place of Mary the Mother of Jesus in this mystery.

In his immense desire to share this insight with others and in filial dependence on Mary he formed her Legion to be a sign of her maternal love for the world and a means of enlisting all her children in the Church's evangelising work.

We thank you Father for the graces conferred on him and for the benefits accruing to the Church from his courageous and shining faith. With confidence we beg you that through his intercession you grant the petition we lay before you...

We ask too that if it be in accordance with your will, the holiness of his life may be acknowledged by the Church for the glory of your Name, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

(With ecclesiastical approval)

ALFIE LAMBE

Former Legion of Mary Envoy in South America
ALPHONSUS (ALFIE) LAMBE

The third member of the Legion of Mary whose cause for canonization is being studied at Rome is Alphonsus Lambe, a native of Ireland.

Alphonsus (Alfie) Lambe was born in Tullamore, Ireland on June 24, 1932. His Parents were well-respected farmers whose home reflected an atmosphere of genuine Christian devotion, which had a very favorable influence on Alfie. Of a frail and delicate nature, he was always cheerful and ready for fun. He was quite intelligent and studious. When he was able to read, it is said that he always preferred religious books. In his early religious life he showed a warm child-like love for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

When he was thirteen years old Alfie announced to his parents that he wanted to be a Christian Brother and at age sixteen was accepted by the Order. His mother found it difficult to part with her favorite son, but she was happy for him when on September 8, 1948, on the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, he was received with forty-nine companions into the Novitiate of the Christian Brothers, and given the name of Brother Ignatius.

Alfie was extremely happy in the Novitiate. As usual he was full of fun; he learned to play the guitar and he loved to sing. It was in the Novitiate that he heard for the first time of the Legion of Mary.

In 1949 his health began to fail. He took fainting spells to such an extent that he was forced to return home to take a temporary leave from Religious Life. This temporary leave became permanent when he learned, while at home, that in his town of Tullamore there was a praesidium of the Legion of Mary. He joined immediately, and his whole life was changed. With enthusiasm he threw himself into Legion work. He learned and practised St. Louis Marie De Montfort's True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It seemed providential that when the firm in which Alfie worked closed down, he did not seek employment locally but went to Dublin and entered the Morning Star hostel for homeless men as an Indoor Brother. This meant full-time apostolic work of the most difficult type.

He also worked to extend the Legion in different parts of Ireland. In this he was outstanding. So much so that those around him were wondering what was coming next. And then the bell of destiny sounded for him. It had been decided at Concilium headquarters to send Seamus Grace as envoy to Colombia and Venezuela. This announcement electrified Alfie. It crystallized all his yearnings, until then hardly understood by himself. That was what he was craving for something really big, a going somewhere into the unknown to look for souls - he was prepared to pay any price for them. This is what he wanted and his wish was granted when Frank Duff talked to him, and Concilium decided to let him go with Seamus Grace to South America.

As a result Seamus Grace and Alfie Lambe were commissioned at the April, 1953 meeting of the Concilium to go to South America. They at once started their preparations. On the 16th of July they set out by plane, spending a week in New York, and then flying on to Bogota, the capitol of Columbia. Waiting for them at the airport was that great Envoy, Miss Joaquina Lucas, who had been an envoy in South America for many years. At Bogota Alfie worked along with Miss Lucas who was his chief Spanish teacher. His progress in that language and in Portuguese was remarkable. By the end of the year he was ready to stand alone.

In South America Alfie quickly became a friend of everyone, especially of the priests. He never made a show of his piety or purity, which was evident to all, and for this he was highly respected. He was cheerful and at ease with cardinals, archbishops and bishops. In fact, he addressed a Conference of South American Bishops in which he spoke so well of the Legion of Mary that many bishops were enthusiastic and wanted to start the Legion of Mary in their dioceses right away. It is said that Alfie set up over 2000 praesidia and numberless curiae all over South America.

With Joaquina Lucas as partner, Alfie's territory was Argentina, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia.

To show how effective was his work in Argentina (a country of a million square miles) there are now 2000 praesidia under three Senatus and a Regia. This is only a small indication of the magnificent extension work Alfie did in South America.

Alfie continued to work even though suffering from stomach cancer. But the time came when he could work no more. He was dying. Archbishop Mozzoni, the Nuncio, who had always been a pillar of consolation for the envoy, gave Alfie the last blessing. The Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Copello, who had never accepted the Legion in his archdiocese, came to administer the last sacraments. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Mozzoni was at Alfie's side as his soul left this world on January 21, 1958. It was the Feast of Saint Agnes (which means "Lamb"). On that very day in Rome the Holy Father is presented with two lambs. It has been pointed out that the Legion of Mary gave the Eternal Father a lamb on that January twenty-first, the reference being to the term *el corderito* (the little lamb) by which Alfie Lambe was affectionately known.

When Alfie died, it was the door of an empty tomb of the Christian Brothers in Buenos Aires that opened to receive him. The Superior had been one of Alfie's fellow-novices in Marino. Surely this is more than a striking coincidence? Our sweet Lord knew how much the Christian Brothers had done for Alfie, and in the end handed him back to them.

After his short life was over everyone was full of praise for this young Irishman. In 1971, just twelve years after his death, his cause for canonization was opened in Rome at the request of many bishops of South America who believed that they had the privilege of the presence of a saint in their midst.

Hilde Firtel, a well-known Legion envoy herself, wrote that "Alfie's life was like a meteor. It flashed suddenly before us, soaring to great heights in the sky, but hardly had we time to admire it, than it was gone."

Prayer for Intercession of Servant of God Alphie Lambe

O God, who by your infinite mercy inflamed the heart of your servant Alfie Lambe, with an ardent love for you and for Mary, our Mother; a love which reveals itself in a life of intense labor, prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of souls, grant, if it be your will, that we may attain, by his intercession, that which we cannot obtain through our own merits, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

(With ecclesiastical approval).

The Concilium, Legion of Mary, Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 will be glad to receive information of any favours received through the intercession of Alfie Lambe.

POSTSCRIPT

Lest you get the impression from this booklet on the three "Saints-To-Be" that the Legion of Mary produces only Irish saints, you should know that in the Legion there are saintly legionaries of other races as well. It should be remembered that many Chinese legionaries were real martyrs as they lived and died in Chinese prisons rather than deny their membership in the Legion of Mary. We know how the Venerable Edel Quinn helped to form many holy legionaries in Africa. But before her time there was the very first legionary of Africa: Michael Ekeng. He was the president of the first praesidium in the entire African continent. This praesidium was started by the Most Rev. Moynagh, then bishop of Calabar. Michael Ekeng was Bishop Moynagh's right hand man in the task of extending and perfecting the Legion of Mary in the Calabar diocese. He was described as "a man of God" or more accurately, as a "free man of God", for Michael had tasted the bitter experience of slavery, had bought his

freedom by his own industry, and had then found his way into the Catholic Church via Protestantism in which he had been instructed by his former master.

Michael Ekeng's capacity for work was amazing. For example, he would start from Calabar at 1 A.M., travel to Oran 18 miles by canoe, go on from there to a Legion meeting 55 miles away, and after the meeting cycle on 12 miles to the nearest mission, fasting all the time, to receive Holy Communion. He was a fine example of what Bishop Moynagh called "the wonderful effects of the Legion on the legionaries themselves. Although nothing official has been acknowledged to date, there was talk in Africa of the introduction of Michael's cause for sainthood as well.

During the Holy Year of 1950 Bishop Moynagh sent Michael on a pilgrimage to Rome, and thence to Ireland. Mr. Ekeng addressed the Concilium of the Legion of Mary, attended many Legion functions and took part in a pilgrimage to Lough Derg.

Michael Ekeng never ceased to express gratitude for what the Irish missionaries and the Legion had done for Africa. May his noble soul rest in peace.

Acknowledgements

I have used as the sources of my information biographies by the following authors:

Frank Duff, Cardinal Leon-Joseph Suenens, Rev. Robert Bradshaw, Doreen Cummins, Mary Peffley, Rev. Anselm Moynihan, O.P, Hilda Firtel, Maria Legionis Magazine, Praedicanda Publications.

-Msgr. Thomas B. Falls

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Published by

MARIA LEGIONIS

NORTH AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT

The Magazine of the Legion of Mary

5109 N. BROAD STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19141 [\(215\) 457-6343](tel:2154576343)

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