

Parish Spotlight

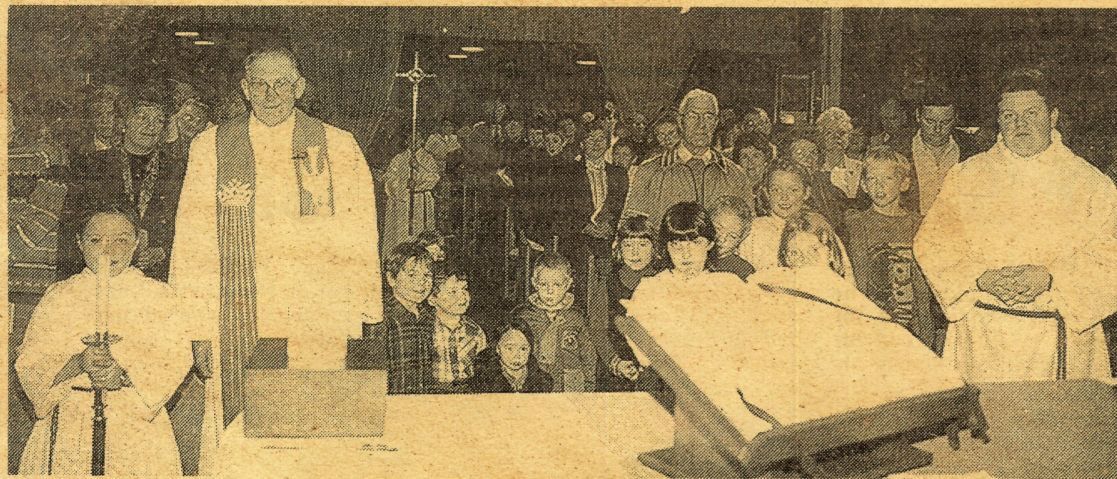
St Teresa's Parish Abergele and Christ the King, Town

THE Catholic Church in Abergele and Towyn number about 500 people — average age about 70yrs. The community is served by an Irish parish priest with forty years pastoral experience, an English Deacon now in his fourth year of ministry, an Irish Religious Sister who has worked in the diocese for the past seventeen years and senior altar server, "bene merenti" medal holder, who has served daily Mass for the past seventy three years.

In recent years the church has seen a rapid growth in membership and Mass attendance. This is due to an increasing number of very committed Catholics from the larger cities of England who find Abergele and Towyn pleasant and welcoming areas in which to find a place to retire. We celebrate far more Golden Jubilees than actual weddings. Weekday daily 10.00am Mass alternatively in Towyn and Abergele, is very well attended with Communion under both species.

Construction

Abergele Church was built in 1934. Dedicated to St. Theresa of Lisieux, the church is constructed of rock-faced rubble limestone. Designed by Signor Rinvolveri, of Conwy, and built by Messrs. Gregory and Son of Caernarfon at a cost of £4000, it is in the Byzantine style, cruciform with a dome, segmental roofs and an apse terminating each arm. The interior has plain plastered surfaces.



● Mass at Town.

When numbers of English and Irish visitors were enormous in the 60's and 70's, a second building within the parish was opened in 1974 at Towyn, four miles from Abergele. This is a modern structure, catering not only for residents in the eastern part of the parish but also for the many summer holiday-makers. This church dedicated to Christ the King was seriously flooded in 1990 but the community was soon back at work and worship though it will be years before the grounds are restored to their former splendour. In the grounds of Towyn Church there is a cemetery for the burial of Ashes.

The nature of the parish means that there are many people available for the various ministries. There is a great need here of Eucharistic Ministers because of the number of elderly who are housebound and all of whom receive Holy Communion either in their homes or in the many retirement

homes from the four Masses each weekend. We are lucky to have organists for all Masses. One Saturday each year is given to an in-service day, at Loreto Centre, Llandudno, for all ministers together with the Parish Priests. An active SVP group meets in Towyn and their finances are helped by a collection after weekend Masses. A prayer group meets in Towyn each Thursday. Regular meetings take place with ministers and laity of other denominations and we are deeply involved with "Christians against Torture".

Exercises

For the second time in seven years a group of people are being taken through the Ignatian Exercises by members of the Jesuit outreach team. This group of parishioners have just begun a 17 week session which will occupy them with a fortnightly meeting in Abergele Church each Wednesday between now

and June '97. A total of forty three people have now benefited from this Jesuit initiative which is very much appreciated.

A 'Social Guild' works from Towyn church each Wednesday. The participants, many of them from other denominations, especially the ladies, work and plan all kinds of creative craft activities which are continued at home and which in the normal year enables them to stage two sales of work netting about £2000 each time. This group also acts mainly as organisers of social activities and outings to places far and near. The whole parish is invited to all the social and financial planning sessions. The combined gifts of local people and new residence makes it possible to undertake with a little effort most challenges such as a Nation Eisteddfod, a three day Flower Festival or an annual inter-denominational Palm Sunday procession with a donkey.

From March to October each year we have regular visitors to their own seaside caravans and these

have become so much a part of the parish that they readily take their place in every parish ministry. The visiting grandchildren of residence add to our children's liturgy most Sundays in both churches. However, our youth have to look to neighbouring parishes and to the deanery for other meaningful involvement in scouts, brownies and other groups as part their active commitment and ministry. The presence of so many young people in our congregation, especially during all school holidays, makes our adults and children alike optimistic and hopeful for the future.

The Centenary of St Therese of Lisieux

To celebrate this Centenary Year of the death of Little Flower, each month we will serialise a booklet on her life, originally written by the Carmelites in Edinburgh.

PART TWO

She had a special affection for her elder sister Pauline and when her mother would ask her, 'What are you thinking about?' the answer would invariably be, 'Of Pauline.' One day she overheard it said that Pauline would be a nun. 'Without knowing what being a nun meant, I said to myself, 'I too will be a nun'.

When Therese was four and half years old, a great sorrow overwhelmed the Martin family through the death at forty six of their saintly mother after painful illness heroically borne.

M. Martin then decided to take his young family to the country town of Lisieux where M. Guerin, Mme Martin's brother lived with his wife and two children. He brought a house on the outskirts of the town called "Les Buissonnets — The Bushes".

It was in this place, 'little Mother' to

A PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE

TWO Tywyn housewives, after reading a book on Medjugorje decided to go and see for themselves. "We spent a week there and we found this unique place which stunned us with its deep spirituality". "To call it a 'road to Damascus' experience would not be an exaggeration and we came home with a deep inner peace and a greater depth of faith than we had ever imagined possible and which has never left us" they said.

They continued " Medjugorje is a small Croatian village nestled in the mountains about ten miles west of Mostar in what was the former Yugoslavia and is now in Bosnia Herzegovina. In 1933 the local people built a huge cross at the top of their most prominent mountain, Mount Krizivac, to commemorate the death of Christ. The church of St James was built in 1955 to try and draw the five local villages closer together and to prevent petty squabbles. This Church, larger than Bangor Cathedral, serves a tiny community of no more than 500 people. Now it is overflowing with villagers and pilgrims for the Croation Mass every evening.

In June 1981, over a period of two to three days, Our Lady is said to have appeared to a total of six children between the ages of 10 and 17, and continued to appear to them on a daily for a number of years. The impact of these apparitions is that these six children, by their example of devout faith and adherence to Our Lady requests of Peace, Prayer, Fasting, Confession and Conversion, have converted an entire parish of five villages, and have brought spiritual succour to ten millions pilgrims.

The first thing that we two sceptics noticed was that in Medjugorje, the people's love of God is the rock upon which they build their lives. Coming from Western Europe, I have frequently found conversations relating to God cringe-making in the extreme for some people; where a lot of young and trendy couldn't possibly be so 'uncool' as to admit to a faith, and street cred is becoming part of their creed. It was extraordinary to see an entire community in such a state of prayer, which is beautiful in its simplicity. All ages practise their faith on a daily basis; it would be considered 'extreme' here at home. Children as young as 7 take an active part in the reciting of the prayers and adolescents; complete with trainers, torn jeans and NY baseball caps and usually be found helping.

What the Medjugorje community lack in material terms seems unimportant when you see what they do have. They have what no amount of Common Market grant or subsidy can buy. It can't be bought. The Croatian word for peace is 'MIR'. They have MIR in their souls".

Eucharistic Ministers Prayer Day



THE Ministers of the Eucharist in the Dolgellau Deanery met in Holy Cross Church, Gellilydan in October for their annual Day of Prayer. The day consisted of some training plus a period of prayer and reflection. A Talk was given by Fr Sinot on The Eucharist as the sacrament of Healing. The day concluded with the celebration of Mass.

DIOCESAN ECUMENICAL COMMISSION

Bishop Edwin Regan has set up a Commission to foster the ideal of working towards Christian Unity through out the Diocese. The Commission hopes to gather information from Parishes about what is happening in the Diocese on the ecumenical front. It will liaise with 'Cytun — Churches Together in Wales'.

It is hoped that eventually there will be two people

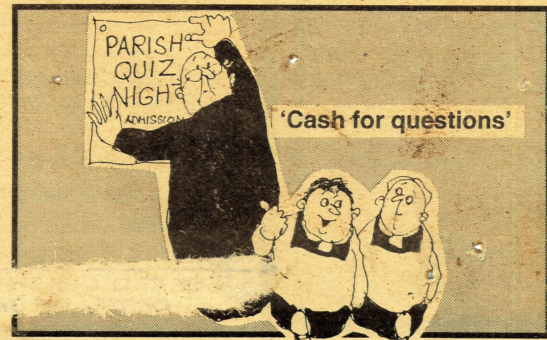
on the Commission from each of our six Deaneries in the Diocese. The Chairman is Canon Michael Tompkins of Porthmadog. Please write to the Secretary, if you would like to know more about its work; she is: Mrs Mary Murtagh, 13 Kensington Avenue, Old Colwyn, Colwyn. LL29 9SE.



Therese, taught her lessons and catechism, and helped her overcome her faults and grow in that love of God which she had earlier learned from her mother.

After her mother's death a great change took place in Therese; instead of being lively and talkative, she

became shy, timid and so sensitive that she would cry merely at a look. "In fact, my extreme sensitiveness made me almost unbearable." It was not until ten years later when she was fourteen that she became her joyful, merry self again.



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