

## Year of Consecrated Life: celebration

### OUR STORY...

**Hymn:** *Christ be our light (verse one)*

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.  
Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people,  
Light for the world to see.

**Reader one:** Our story begins with two men in Cork... Saint Finbarr and Saint Fachtna...

Saint Finbarr who died in the year 623 established a monastic settlement where the River Lee rises in Gougane Barra – in the parish of Uibh Laoire.

He journeyed to the mouth of the River Lee and there he established his monastic school... now University College, Cork which gives rise to the words “where Finbarr taught, let Munster learn”.

**Reader two:** Saint Fachtna, established his monastery and school in Rosscarbery towards the end of the sixth century. His school gained an international reputation as a centre for scripture study. Saint Fachtna later became Bishop of Ross – a diocese made up of 11 parishes.

**Reader one:** From its origins as a monastic settlement the modern city of Cork was founded between 915 and 922 when the Vikings arrived in the area

**Reader two:** In 1169 the Normans invaded Cork and took over the city. The medieval population of Cork was about 2,000.

**Reader one:** At this time the Catholic community was served mainly by the monastic orders for example the Cistercians at Tracton and the Benedictines in the city.

Into this milieu came the mendicant friars preaching the Gospel to the people of Cork

The Dominicans arrived to what is now St Maries of the Isles in 1229  
Followed by the Franciscans to the Grey Friary in Shandon in 1231 who later founded the Abbey at Timoleague.

After a break of a century the Carmelite Friars moved into Kinsale in 1334 having been offered land by a local Norman landlord

And over 150 years later the Augustinians came to Cork to the Red Abbey in 1472

The seeds of faith were now being planted in the hearts of all the people

**Hymn**

***Christ be our light (chorus)***

Christ be our light! shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ be our light! Shine in your Church gathered today.

**Reader two:**

Events in history around this time included in 1517 the Protestant Reformation which saw reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII challenge papal authority and question the Catholic Church's ability to define Christian practice.

1601 saw this area experience the Battle of Kinsale

In 1649 Cromwell invaded Ireland and in 1652 the Act of Settlement saw all Catholic owned land confiscated and given to English and Scottish settlers.

**Reader one:**

1766 saw the opening of Saint Finbarr's South Church and this area of Cove Lane, now Douglas Street – in the South Parish – came to the fore in 1771 with the arrival of the Capuchins to the South Friary to minister to the poor of the city and the invitation from Cork woman Nano Nagle to the Ursulines in Paris, including four young Irish girls who had made their novitiate there, to come from Paris to join her in providing education in the Hedge Schools she was running in the city area.

**Reader two:**

Nano Nagle was instrumental in the provision of education for Catholics which at this time was illegal in Ireland.

In 1775 she founded the Presentation Sisters to continue her work with the poor in these penal times

The Presentation Sisters were joined in Cork in their ministry of education to the poor by the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers in 1811.

It was in 1795 that Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth was founded as the National Catholic seminary for Ireland where generations of our priests have studied.

**Reader one:**

The Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Anne, the Mother Church of our diocese, was opened in 1808

In response to the poverty of the people we see a growth in the number of religious congregations seeking to live the Gospel of Christ in all its richness.

Cork woman Mary Aikenhead in 1826 founded the Religious Sisters of Charity who lived beside the North Cathedral and visited the poor in their homes

And in 1837 the Mercy Sisters were invited to Cork by Miss Barbara Gould who made an offer to found a convent at her own expense – Bishop John Murphy accepted her generous offer and the sisters came to Rutland Street.

This was against the backdrop of Catholic Emancipation that involved reducing and removing many of the restrictions on Roman Catholics introduced by the Act of Union.

**Reader two:**

Ireland was so steeped in poverty that in 1836 the Poor Law Unions were set up to provide workhouses where the poorest of the poor could be fed.

1838 saw Capuchin Fr Theobald Mathew establish the Cork Total Abstinence Association.

When the potato famine hit Ireland in 1845 reaching its peak in 1847 these workhouses were sadly unable to cope with the demand of the poor. In Ireland over one million people died and the same number emigrated from these shores...

It is against this setting that religious congregations already in Cork continued to stand in solidarity with the poor and many more came to the fore.

**Hymn:**

***Christ be our light (verse 3 & chorus)***

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,

Shared until all are fed.

Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ be our light! Shine in your Church gathered today.

**Reader one:**

1848 sees the Vincentians invited to Cork to assist in the running of a school

1860 brings the Rosminians to Upton in Innishannon having been requested by a local judge to establish a reformatory school for boys.

During the cholera outbreak of 1867 the Bon Secours sisters were asked to come to care for the sick and the dying – they came to Dyke Parade before moving to Fitzgerald's Park and later founding the hospital on College Road

Also in 1867 the Daughters of Charity were asked to come and take over the running of the North Infirmary – now the Maldron Hotel

These were followed closely in 1872 by the Good Shepherd Sisters who were asked to come and work with women and girls who were excluded from society.

**Reader two:**

Later this century we witness the growth of the overseas missions.

In 1877 the SMA fathers were welcomed to Cork to open a school for boys to recruit English speaking candidates for their recently founded missionary society.

They were joined in 1887 by the OLA sisters who came to Cork to learn English to enable them to support the SMA Fathers in their missions in Africa

This same year, 1887, the Diocese established Farranferris as a boarding and day school for boys – from here generations of young men went on to study for the priesthood in our diocese.

The following year, 1888, Bishop O'callaghan invited the Reparation Sisters to Cork to share their life of prayer, adoration and service with the people.

The year 1895 saw the first copy of the Sheaf, the newsletter of the Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society issued by Olivia Taaffe seeking financial assistance and prayerful support for the young men who felt called to priesthood but whose parents were unable to fund their studies.

In 1899 the Bishop also invited the Little Sisters of the Assumption to come to provide nursing and health care to people in their own homes.

**Reader one:**

In 1906 Bishop O'Callaghan asked the Franciscan Missionaries of Saint Joseph to come to manage the domestic side of Farranferris College.

And in 1909 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, founded in France, anxious to open a junior seminary in Ireland, were welcomed to Cork with the blessing of the Bishop.

**Reader two:** While the world was experiencing the outbreak of World War One in 1914, Christmas of that year saw the founding of the Poor Clare Monastery on College Road – with the financial assistance of a Cork business man whose daughter was in the monastery in Tournai in Belgium who desired to have her nearer home – this happened with the help of the Poor Clares from Carlow.

During these war years and in the year of the 1916 Rising in Ireland, Cork man Edward Galvin was founding the Maynooth Mission to China – now known as the Columban Missionaries.

A few years later in 1922 the La Retraite Sisters came to Cork to Jail Cross to establish a house of retreat.

Also in 1922 conscious of the needs of pregnant young women who at that time were residing in the workhouse (now Saint Finbarr’s Hospital) the Bishop asked the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary to come and assist them.

In 1951 the Kiltegan Fathers established their seminary in Cork at Sutton House, now Rochestown Park Hotel, to allow their students to attend UCC to train as teachers for the missions.

In 1958 the Diocese of Cork and the Diocese of Ross are united to become the Diocese of Cork and Ross.

**Reader one:** The biggest change in our Church came when Pope John XXIII announced the Second Vatican Council which took place in five sessions between 1962 and 1965. When John XXIII died in June 1963 and his successor Pope Paul VI was elected he chose to continue the work of this council in its mission to renew all aspects of the life and ministry of the Church across the world.

**Reader two:** Following the documents of Vatican II religious orders and congregations began to reflect on their life and ministry in the light of their charism and the inspiration of their founders and so we saw much change come in how consecrated life is lived in the world today.

We now begin to see consecrated men and women respond to the changing needs of society and to seek out new ways of bringing the Gospel to the heart of the world.

**Reader one:** A major diocesan development came in 1965 with the collaboration between the Diocese, the Bon Secours Sisters, the Mercy Sisters and the Presentation Sisters who together founded the Cork mission to Peru

under the leadership of Bishop Lucey which later spread to Ecuador. Today the results of this pioneering work in South America are seen as native priests and religious have taken over the work begun by priests and religious from Cork. We welcome among us Sr Fidelina from Peru who is now living and ministering in our diocese.

In 1969 the Irish Bishops Conference set up Veritas with its first publication being the book "Patrick, in his own words" and 1973 they established Trócaire as their agency for overseas development.

**Reader two:** 1979 was a momentous year for the Irish Church with the visit of Pope John Paul II to our shores.

**Reader one:** In 1984 the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, having spent many years on mission in Asia, discerned that the local sisters in these countries were ready to take over and decided to expand and respond to local needs at home. At this time Ballincollig was a rapidly growing area and the sisters saw this as a place to begin a new chapter of mission.

The Cenacle sisters in 1988 discerned that a small community of sisters inserted into a local community was a new way for them and so they came to Ballyvolane from Dublin.

At the invitation of Bishop Murphy in 1988 the Redemptorists came to Cork to focus on the faith formation of young adults – later becoming the Scala youth ministry project

Lastly, in 2001 the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary came to Cork to work with the asylum seekers coming to Ireland to seek a better life for themselves and their families – bringing with them their many years of experience of missionary work among the African peoples.

**Reader Two:** The year 2005 saw the launch of Pilgrim Steps, issued by Bishop Buckley as our pastoral plan for the Diocese prepared from conversations and listening sessions with priests, religious and laity from across Cork and Ross.

This led to a flowering of the involvement of lay people in all aspects of parish ministry

In 2013 Bishop Buckley invited the first applications to serve in the Permanent Diaconate alongside introducing training for the ministry of Parish Catechist.

**Hymn:** *Christ be our light (verse 5 & chorus)*

Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another  
Making your kingdom come.

Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ be our light! Shine in your Church gathered today.

**Reader one:**

Today we have celebrated the story of faith, of witness, of service given willingly and with love by thousands of men and women over the centuries and this is the reason we can gather here now in 2015. Today there are still needs to be served in so many different ways...together let us pray in hope for our future ...