

Pallottine Voices

Easter

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Karibu Tena Siuyu (Welcome Back to Siuyu)

Anika Babel

My inherited affiliation for Tanzania was realised in Easter 2008 when my mother brought our family to the country she cherishes so fondly. At thirteen, I was old enough to understand the gravity of this trip and appreciate the privilege of meeting the people behind the stories I was raised on. My mother, Anne Wrafter, warned me of the proverbial ‘African Bug’ that bit her during her first visit to East Africa. In 1982, that bug called her back and she spent two formative years working at Makiungu Hospital. I am glad to say that this bug also bit me!

Ten years after our family trip, I returned on my own; eager to acquaint myself with Tanzania and be of assistance in any way that I could. In January 2018, Fr. Oliver O’Brien welcomed me to Arusha with the famous ‘Céad míle fáilte’ of his Irish heritage and the inexhaustible ‘karibu sana’ of his Tanzanian home. Though separated by over seven thousand kilometres, these two nations share a wonderful kinship when it comes to their kind, generous, and welcoming spirit. Arusha was my base for this three-month visit. Here, I helped with English lessons and taught music to postulants at the Pallottine house. My escapades to Fr. Tommy Ryan in Siuyu, however, are perhaps the memories that I hold dearest.

In the heart of Siuyu (a small rural village near the central Tanzanian town of Singida) live the children of the Rehabilitation Centre. Established in 2007 to accommodate twenty students with varying physical or intellectual needs, the bright-yellow campus is now bursting with around fifty children. I have not come across a more contented bunch, as these photographs may attest.

The children attend the local school, where there are special education classrooms. Many of the students are integrated into ‘mainstream’ classes and have gone

on to complete further education in subjects such as accountancy. Their daily commute to the nearby school is really something to behold. To the local community, the children’s parade is par for the course. To the outsider, this short journey exemplifies life at the Siuyu Rehabilitation Centre. The older children support the younger, the mobile scramble for the joy of pushing an all-terrain wheelchair, while utterly resolute footsteps are coursed through the sandy path. Merriment underscores all of this, as does the odd bout of playful mischief!

The children wear their uniform with pride. It is a green and blue outfit with yellow and black stripes — the flag colours worn by students all across Tanzania. Outside of school, the children select their outfits from a communal mountain of donated clothes, meticulously maintained by the women who work at the Rehabilitation Centre. There is little materialism behind their selection; boys wear girls clothes, girls wear boys clothes, and articles are worn inside out or back to front. Like most items at the Centre, clothes serve a more practical purpose. Self-expression shines through their vivacious interactions with one another rather than through the possession of material things.



To a large extent, the Centre is a self-sustaining system. A team of local men and women watch over the children, prepare their meals, and assist them with their day-to-day needs. Chickens and goats graze around the little campus, and the Siuyu community share crops with the children. The small physical therapy clinic is furnished with inventive amenities and Sr. Rosemary Ombay oversees the placement of medical students here.

There is one television set that is used in the evening. The TV meter, like many utilities across Africa, is

☞ managed by a sophisticated mobile finance system. When the meter runs low, the children call out to 'babu' to top it up with his phone. Indeed, any time Fr. Ryan is within eye or earshot, the children endearingly cheer 'babu, babu!' ('grandfather figure').

What I observed during my short time at the Siuyu Rehabilitation Centre was how so much can be achieved with so little. As such, any donation of any size makes a considerable impact on the children's quality of life. I arrived with €1,000 raised at the 'Tunes for Tanzania' concert in Dublin. This money was put into immediate use and within a matter of days a special washroom was under construction at the school. This facility further integrates the students into the community, protects their dignity, and maximises time spent at school. Such projects support the local economy, as materials, labour, and maintenance are sourced within the vicinity.

Though the everyday cost efficiency at the Rehabilitation Centre is impressive, there are always medical expenses, projects, and other contingencies that need financing. The continued growth of the Centre, alongside its capacity to sustain a nourishing home in which the children can flourish, depends on the generous donations of the public. Every penny exponentially aids the incredible work carried out in Siuyu and directly benefits the children who thrive there, thanks to your help.



Ukraine

We continue to pray for the people of Ukraine whose lives have been destroyed because of the ongoing war in their country.

We ask God to protect those who are risking their lives to bring different kinds of relief to the Ukrainians and in this group we include our own Pallottine members working in Kyiv, Odesa, Zhytomy and Lviv.

They shelter a lot of families and provide them with food. We dedicate to all of you the following prayer for peace to our founder, St Vincent Pallotti.

O St Vincent Pallotti, practitioner of peace, who brings to every person, to every family, and to every community the peace of Christ, intercede for us before God so that we may experience a lasting peace.

Help us so that peace may dominate our hearts, our homes, and the whole world. Based on your example we mean to be messengers of peace in the Church and in our surroundings.

St Vincent Pallotti, obtain from Jesus true peace for our uneasy world, threatened and dominated by great conflicts. O St Vincent Pallotti, who loved and preached peace, Pray for Us. Amen!

Fr. Eugene Remembered

Fr John O'Connor SAC



Fr Liam asked me to preach at this Mass but if you don't mind, instead of preaching I would rather like to share with you some of my personal thoughts about Eugene and in doing so hopefully you will be able to remember your time with him also.

The first reading from today's Mass tells us that there is a time for everything, and today we remember some of the special times in Eugene's life. Today we come together to celebrate the Mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. Eugene Lynch. We ask the good Lord to grant Eugene eternal rest and to thank God for the many wonderful ways that Eugene touched our lives and the lives of so many people during his 63 years in this world.

Eugene was a BIG MAN. He was very big physically but he was also very big in many other ways. I can say without fear of contradiction that he was larger than life. As I thought about Eugene during the last few weeks, I cried a lot and I also smiled a lot. I remember going shopping with Eugene and of course I had to push the trolley while he did the shopping. His policy was "Why buy one thing when you can buy five". This meant that while he piled up the trolley, I spent my time putting most things back on the shelf.

He was a fantastic cook but used the same philosophy. "Why use one plate when you can use five? Why cook for two when you can cook for six?". Eating the food was really wonderful but washing up after him was a nightmare. If his car had a problem, he knew more than the mechanic. If he was feeling unwell, he knew more than the doctor. While in Greenford last week I looked into his office and his computer had more than one monitor. This personified what Eugene was like.

He had opinions on everything and I used to call this his "Mandrake Complex". He only laughed at me when I pointed this out to him. He was highly intelligent and very well read. In later years he resorted to Google for information and that wasn't a great idea. It always frustrated me that I was never able to beat him at Trivial Pursuit and I am sure that he would have done very well at The Chase.

He has kept this right up to today. This is his fourth Requiem Mass and on top of that he had a Prayer Vigil and a Service in the crematorium. Who else but Eugene could



have had such a BIG funeral? He remained true to his philosophy: “Why have one funeral when you can have six?” Undoubtedly Eugene got it right as today’s funeral here in Thurles is a very intimate one with just his two families, the Lynches and the Pallottines, present

We all know that Eugene brought his “Mandrake Complex” to so many other places, to his life, to his priesthood, to his parishioners, to those who sought his help and to his friends. He was generosity personified. He was generous with his time, with his talents and with his material goods. He had an extraordinary effect on people and seemed to be able to interpret their needs.

He was big physically but his heart was far bigger than his body. No wonder he is missed by so many people. Behind his strong outward appearance Eugene was a big softie and his sufferings helped him to associate with and understand the sufferings of others. I have had so many people from Argentina contact me since news of his illness and death got out and they all shared with me their experiences of him and how he touched their lives.

His family played a very important part in his life and I was always touched to see his relationship with his mother



and his desire to shelter her from any pain or trouble. It was a great privilege to go with him to visit Maureen during her final years. He was delighted when Ann, Gary, Lisa and Kevin came to visit us in Argentina in 1995 and Derry and I shared some great times with them. He was also delighted when Lisa went to live with him in Suipacha for a year in 1997. I am sure that she will never forget that experience. I know that he certainly didn’t. I know that you will all miss him but I am also certain that he will never leave you alone.

On a personal level I must say that I was privileged to be able to say that Eugene was my friend and the brother I never had. We got to know each other when we worked together in the Fahy Institute in Argentina. We got on very well together but our deep friendship began after the horrendous car accident that Eugene suffered on the 20th of November in 1983. He was very badly burned

especially on his back, arms and hands and I never saw anyone to suffer as much as he did for months after the accident. I was one of the few who could visit him and we shared very intense and difficult moments together. We were joined together by his sufferings. We formed a very genuine and deep friendship which lasted right up to the very end.

We had some great times together and some wonderful holidays over the years and although Eugene was a very complex and private person, I can safely say that I knew him and he knew me. I will miss him greatly, it’s as if part of me has been taken away.

We knew that Eugene was unwell and that things were progressively getting worse. He was finding it very difficult to walk. A mutual friend from Buenos Aires who was in constant contact with him asked him, shortly before Christmas how he was. He replied with a line from an Argentine tango “En la lucha cruel y mucha. Haciendo lo que se puede”. Roughly translated this means “In the struggle which is cruel and a lot. Doing what I can”. I think that sums up the last few months of Eugene’s life.

The second reading from today’s Mass is very appropriate when we think of Eugene’s life: “As for me I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time for my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”.

Like everyone, I was deeply shocked at the speed of his final illness. The kindness that Tom Daly showed to him during that very difficult time is something that we should all be very grateful for. I will always thank God and indeed Tom that I was able to be with Eugene shortly before he died. He was very pleased to see us and although he was very weak, he was very alert and we spoke for a while.

Then he noticed that I had the Holy Oils in my hand and he looked at me and said, “Do it”. I anointed him, gave him the Sacrament of the Sick, and when I went to give him Holy Communion, I asked if I should break the host and give him just a small piece. He said “Give it all to me”. After that we prayed the Our Father together and spoke of our mutual affection. It was as if he had waited for Tom and myself to be together with him before he went to God.

Today’s Gospel makes it clear that this world is not our home. We are a pilgrim people and our true home is in heaven. Jesus tells us that in Our Father’s house there is a room for each of us. I have no doubt that Eugene is now installed in his room and is probably surrounded by gadgets. I’m sure that he has a computer with many screens and is probably trying to convince Saint Peter to install a new router.

Eugene is now at peace and his suffering has ended. We will miss him greatly but I know that he will always be with us.

God bless you, Eugene. We love you very much.

Mission Promotion and Appeals Galway Diocese 2022

Fr Martin Mareja SAC



The Co-ordinated Parish Promotion Program (CPPP) has been on hold since 2020 due to public health guidelines for Churches. In 2021, we received with great enthusiasm, the good news that the Irish Episcopal Conference has given the go-ahead to start the promotion program again. We are privileged to visit the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora.

Most Rev Bishop Brendan Kelly invited us to pay him a visit on the 14th of March 2022 before we make contact with parish priests of the Diocese. This meeting is an important one because the Bishop gives guidelines on how to smoothly conduct promotion in his Diocese.

We look forward to sharing the spirit of our charism with members of God’s family in the Diocese and we will also use this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to family members, friends, helpers and benefactors of the Pallottine confreres from the Diocese who worked in Tanzania and Kenya for many years.

Monsignor Patrick Winters, himself a Galway man from Killimor and a Pallottine, was the first Bishop of Mbulu diocese in Tanzania. He was convinced that education was the best way forward. Dealing with an area almost the size of Ireland he, in his first few years as Bishop, created approximately fifty primary schools, three middle schools, and two hospitals, together with ten new mission stations. Both hospitals were under the expert

direction of the Medical Missionaries of Mary. None of this would have been possible without the financial assistance of people from his native Galway.

The Pallottines are as committed as ever to continue to realize our motto – “*The love of Christ urges us on*”. St. Vincent Pallotti, our founder, wanted clergy and laity to pray and work together to bring the love of Christ into our lives and extend that love to our brothers and sisters in need wherever we find them in the world. This is precisely what motivated men and women from Ireland to leave the comfort of their own country and culture, their family and friends and to go out to different countries to share the love of Christ with others.

On behalf of our Promotion Team I wish to thank you for your prayers, sacrifices, help and support over the years, and as we unite our efforts in the daily work of spreading the love of Christ – or struggling to alleviate famine and suffering – we see how apt are the words of Christ: “I was hungry and you gave me to eat”.

Let me conclude with this short prayer:

Lord inspire us with a deep love of You.

Help us in our work of serving our brothers and sisters in need.

Our Lady Queen of Apostles, pray for us.

St. Vincent Pallotti pray, for us.

I wish you a very happy and blessed Easter.

Argentina and Ireland

Fr. Johnny Sweeney praying at an adoration chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Knock in San Patricio Church, Mercedes, Argentina.



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Dear Fr. Martin,

I enclose an offering of € to help the Pallottines’ mission to assist, educate and empower the people they minister to.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS.

Name

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Send to: **Fr. Martin Mareja, SAC**
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