

The Legion of Mary – and Parishioner Maria Igoe’s recent ‘Peregrinatio Pro Christo’ Project in Tenby, in Wales.

Maria writes of the background to the Legion, and to the Peregrinatio projects that she undertakes annually:

‘The Legion of Mary began in Dublin in 1921 and spread to Scotland in 1928 and soon after to almost every country in the world. Its object is the Glory of God through the holiness of its members. At the weekly meetings prayer is intermingled with reports on work done and discussion.

Our weekly work is carried out through faith and in union with Mary, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Legion members go forth in pairs to visit the homes of the parish, especially where people are housebound or sick. Our work is always done with the approval of the Parish Priest.

In 1958 students from University College Dublin were working in London and, desiring to carry on their Legion membership, went out into the streets, initially to speak to other Irish folk who had come to work in London, encouraging them to keep practising their faith. This led to meeting trains from Ireland and leafleting arrivals with the times of Masses and helping them obtain suitable accommodation.

The students so enjoyed this work that it spread to carrying out Peregrinatio Visitation ‘Projects’ door-to-door in other cities. Like the apostles, the Legion has always had a desire to evangelise and this work spread rapidly. From the early 60s many Scottish Legionaries took part. There are Projects all over the world today.

Father Tabone reports from his parish of Nadur in Gozo that his members have this year been to Birmingham, travelling from Malta. Members from Scotland and Ireland go to Finland in July with some success and much gratitude from the Priests, who feel the support of this missionary effort.’

REPORT OF ‘PEREGRINATIO PRO CHRISTO’ PROJECT TO TENBY.

(“Peregrinatio Pro Christo’ means adventuring or travelling for Christ for a short time, evangelising in a particular place’)

‘I applied to take part in a Legion of Mary Project of evangelisation from 3rd to 10th August and was allocated to go to Tenby, South West Wales. Tenby seemed very difficult to get to from Edinburgh and I thought I might have to cancel, but I decided to fly on the Friday evening to Cardiff, which was a lot cheaper than Saturday and stayed overnight in a Holiday Inn. On Saturday I was able take the train to Tenby. I was accompanied by a Legion member from Aberdeen. Fortunately it all went smoothly.

The Team consisted of Fr Eamonn O’Driscoll, a kind and gentle Franciscan from Dublin, 2 men and 3 ladies from the south of Ireland, 1 young man and 1 older lady from Northern Ireland, 1 lady from Essex and the 2 of us from Scotland.

The Parish of Tenby has a church in the town and another church in Saundersfoot. They are seaside towns, which attract many holidaymakers in the summer. The Parish Priest has been there for about 6 months. He is a Welshman, who is a ‘late vocation’, but is still youngish.

The Team would go to Mass at 8.30am, have a Meeting at 9am and visit in 3 sessions during the day: 10.30 – 1pm, 2pm – 4.30, 5.30 – 8pm. Visitation was door-to-door in twos. We had the use of the Parish Hall and kitchen for our Meetings, meals and for writing our reports in the evening. Fr Usher had a letter for us to give to every home to introduce himself, advise them that the church was open every day and invite them to a special Mass and celebration on the Friday evening. A total of 2271 homes were visited, with 1350 no replies. 1400 miraculous medals were distributed. 38 practicing Catholics and 54 lapsed Catholics were encountered. 8 people expressed an interest in learning more about the Catholic Faith. A total of 8 special cases were reported.

We had many interesting conversations and met many lovely people. Here are some of my contacts:

(1) Kirsty-Anne is a 20 year old single mother of a 16 month old boy. She had lost her mother and then her friend to suicide. She suffers from depression and finds life difficult at times. She expressed an interest in visiting the church and says she will do this with friends whose children attend the Catholic School. She accepted a Miraculous Medal and some literature. We encouraged her to contact Fr Usher and told her that God loves her very much.

(2) Matthew is a young man whose family are Italian. He told us he was an atheist but was keen to talk. We answered questions for him and witnessed to what we believe. He accepted a Miraculous Medal and leaflet and also a rosary and leaflet on how to say the prayers.

(3) Eleanor is a teacher but has been unable to get a permanent job. She will give herself 3 years and if she cannot get a job teaching, she will try something else. She seemed rather depressed, as she says it is almost impossible to get a teaching job. We hoped that talking to us helped her and we encouraged us to pray and ask God's help. She took a Miraculous Medal and leaflet.

(4) Auriel is a teacher who has just had her 70th birthday. She is still working with children with challenging behaviour and other problems. She brought up 3 children on her own after her husband left her. They have done well. Her son was married in Killarney to an Irish Catholic girl. She loves Ireland and said that the people made her welcome. She was happy to accept a Miraculous Medal and seemed to enjoy chatting to us. It gave her a chance to witness to her life.

People were happy to speak to us, especially if they had problems in their lives. We hoped that we were able to help them by bringing the love of God into their lives.

We were accommodated in the homes of parishioners, who made us very welcome.

On Wednesday afternoon, when we had a few hours off, we visited Caldey Island, which has a Trappist Monastery and is very beautiful.

It was a very busy week but we pray that our work will bear fruit. Thanks go to all the people who promised to pray for the Project. Most of all we thank the Holy Spirit and Our Lady, to whom we felt very close. We sowed seeds, may God bless the harvest.'

The Legion of Mary meets every week in the Parish House, on Tuesdays at 10.45am - for more information, please contact Maria on 07981333219.