

Our Irish Family is expanding quickly

June Perrin
August 1973



Photo date and location unknown

Since our last report there has been a lot of activity here. Several good new people have joined. One boy was studying to be a priest for four years and left, and one girl was planning to be a nun, to find a better purpose for her life in the service of God.

We have opened a new center in Galway on the West Coast. Father's Family should grow well there as the people are very open and warm hearted. The spiritual atmosphere there is also good, with a strong feeling of cleanliness.

Most of the places of penance are on the West Coast. One well known place is Croagh Patrick, a holy mountain where St. Patrick prayed and fasted for forty days to win the Irish people for Christ, and to turn them away from worshipping idols. Legend has it that when he descended from the mountain he cast all the serpents into the sea. To this day there are no poisonous serpents, only harmless grass snakes, in Ireland. The Mountain which is nearly two miles high is very steep and rocky and takes great effort to reach the top as you slip and slide and roll on the pebbles and loose rocks, yet 50,000 people go there on pilgrimage each time, twice a year.

Another famous place of penance on the West Coast, but further north in Donegal County, is an island in Lough Derg (Lake Derg), called St. Patrick's Purgatory. People go there throughout the year. St. Patrick is said to have paid penance there fasting and praying. When people go there they have no sleep for three

days eating only plain toast and drinking black tea, praying all the time. People from all different denominations go there, totaling about 40,000 per year. When you think that the population of Ireland is only 4.5 million, the percentage of people going on these indemnities is very high. I find really a great desire to serve God amongst the Irish people who have a strong but simple faith.

Many, many convents and monasteries throughout the land testify to this. The younger people of course are more open and questioning their faith, which is good for us.

Four Irish boys came back from their stay with the British Family well-seasoned and full of enthusiasm to take Ireland for our Father as they started their Crusade around the country. Our One World Crusade Team is nicknamed St. Patrick's Cathedral as their vehicle has stained glass windows. They are attracting much interest wherever they go and have already brought in new members.

Soon we shall be opening a center in the country 22 miles from Dublin which we'll use mainly for workshop weekends. It is actually a farmhouse that we are renting from the father of one of our members, and in December we'll rent the farm as well. We believe our numbers will greatly expand then.

We have opened an office in Dublin with two rooms so that we can start teaching in the center of the city morning and afternoon and in the center in the evening. It is only five minutes' walk from one of the universities and 20 minutes from our Holy Ground.

Twelve Irish students are at present attending the International Leadership Training Course in Belvedere so we are praying for good crops from that.

Two of our members this last month were fortunate to be able to go to Belvedere with the British Family. Mary White is on one of the bus teams and Kieran O'Neill is studying at Belvedere on the Leadership Training course. Mary's testimony is very amusing for she was sent to spy on the Family by her priest and ended up by joining!

We send our deepest love to our brothers and sisters all over the world.