



Irish Jesuits Celebrating Anniversaries

Our Director **John K. Guiney SJ** celebrates his jubilee – 50 years in the Society – this year. Several other Irish Jesuits also have significant anniversaries in 2021: In the Society 75 years – **John Dooley SJ**; 70 years – **Seán Coghlan SJ**, **Dónal Doyle SJ**, **Frank Wafer SJ**; 60 years – **Peter Carroll SJ**. In the priesthood 60 years – **John Dooley SJ**; 50 years – **Seán O’ Cearbhallain SJ**; 25 years – **Gerry Clarke SJ**.

Maembo – The One Who Sings

Padraig Swan, Director of Faith and Service Programmes in Belvedere College, reflects on the life of **Frank Wafer SJ**, who worked with the Tonga people in Zambia to preserve their language and music.

This year, Frank Wafer SJ marks his 70th anniversary in the Society of Jesus, an incredible achievement and celebration of a lifelong vocation.

Frank was born in 1934 in Dublin and attended Christian Brothers’ schools in Dun Laoghaire and Monkstown. He joined the Jesuits in 1951 when he was just 17. He completed his Bachelors’ Degree in UCD before going to Tullybeg for Philosophy. He first went to Zambia in 1959 for his Regency, and spent the next two years in Chivuna and Chikuni. In 1961 he went to study theology in

Innsbruck, Austria and he completed this part of his Jesuit education in Milltown, Dublin, where he was ordained in 1965.

He completed his Tertianship in 1966, obtaining an MA from the London University School of Oriental and African Studies. That year he also went back to Zambia as a missionary, following in the footsteps of many Irish Jesuits. It was the beginning of many years living and working in rural Chikuni in the diocese of Monze in Southern Zambia.

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Preservation of Tonga Culture

Andrew Lesniara SJ, who worked with him in Chikuni spoke of his love of music and of the Tonga culture and described his work to preserve the heritage of the people who lived there.

“At the very beginning of his work in Zambia Fr Frank Wafer recognised the importance of music and dance in the life of the Tonga people. He was one of the first missionaries of inculturation that was not being talked about or addressed. He drove on his motorbike and recorded traditional music. Based on these tunes, he worked with a team of people who composed Catholic hymns in native Tonga for use at Mass and other occasions.

These became very popular and from them sprang activities of local composers who were given the green light to break tradition of singing



Latin hymns and translating lyrics into Tonga. The music was recorded on reel-to-reel tape recorders and these recordings were used to teach hymns and songs to others in their native language. The collection is currently being digitised to preserve them, otherwise the unique and large collection will be lost. These audio archives will eventually be available online for researchers and cultural enthusiasts."

In addition to writing and recording liturgical music – which is still in use today - Frank spent much of his priestly life writing dictionaries. He created the only Tonga-English dictionary available in the world. He also established the Mukanzubo Institute and Museum in Chikuni for the promotion of Tonga culture, music and dance for the next generation.

The One Who Sings

Frank is known as *maembo* in the Tonga language, meaning 'the one who

sings'. He recognised the importance of holding on to the traditions for the younger generations, and in particular the music. In June 2019, I travelled with a radio producer and professional photographer to Chikuni to start the work of preserving the many recordings made by Frank. In all there are 343 'reel to reel' tapes and 201 cassette tapes of recordings. I had been visiting Chikuni and Mukanzubo for many years and responded to an ongoing request to help preserve the recordings that were stored in a metal filing cabinet and in danger of deteriorating giving a sense of urgency to the project.

The process of preserving the recordings was to first create a catalogue of what recordings were there and to index them with details such as numbering each tape, describing the box, writing a note of the description on the box, the condition of the tape, the size etc. Each tape and associated notes were also photographed. This process took several days and was facilitated by Yvonne Ndala and Mabel

Chombe from the Mukanzubo Institute. The final result is most likely the only comprehensive record of all the recordings made by Frank.

Retirement in Lusaka

Since his retirement from Mukanzubo and Chikuni Frank has spent his time in John Chula House in Lusaka where he is cared for by the Jesuits and a medical team. We were delighted to see him look so well and to be able to share with him the news that work had begun on preserving the large archives of recordings he made, when we visited him in 2019. The news that his recordings would be kept for posterity brought him great joy.

As he marks his 70th anniversary in the Jesuits it is without doubt that he has already left a great legacy - to the Zambia Jesuit Province, to his own personal vocation as a missionary, and to the Tonga people. He has indeed served his mission *for the Greater Glory of God*. AMDG

A Word from the Director

Greetings to everyone during this summer time and thanks be to God we are having some fine weather during the last weeks of July.

It gives us an uplift after living with Covid-19 for the past 18 months. Warmth, a blue sky, blooming gardens and the teeming green countryside is indeed a tonic.

We are celebrating the Jubilees of many of our missionaries this year. They accumulate hundreds of years of mission in the service of the Kingdom of God. We congratulate them.

We also celebrate another Ignatian anniversary this year. The Ignatian Year opened on May 20th, the 500th anniversary of when Ignatius of Loyola was injured by a cannonball in the Battle of Pamplona. The Year will conclude on July 31, 2022, the feast day of St Ignatius. The peak of the celebration will fall on March 12,

2022 - the 400th anniversary of the canonisation of St Ignatius and St Francis Xavier. The motto for the year is to *SEE ALL THINGS NEW IN CHRIST*.

While the Ignatian Year honours the past, we are invited to be future-focused and attend to the Universal Apostolic Preferences which are the key priorities of the mission of the Society for the coming years. They are - Walking with the poor and excluded, Caring for our common home, Accompanying young people, and Showing the way to God through the spiritual exercises and discernment.

In the past months our attention has been drawn to the suffering of the people of Tigray in Ethiopia and we continue our appeal to seek help.



We thank those who have already so generously donated. We also through this newsletter invite people to consider making a bequest to us in their will because your loyal support makes a difference to so many in our world.

Please keep safe and healthy and look out for one another. We will get this through this Covid pandemic together and we are united in prayer for all your needs during this Ignatian Year as we are invited to *see all things new in Christ*.

Fr John K. Guiney SJ, Director



I Am Because We Are

To be asked to write on your jubilee is both shocking and humbling. Shocking in realising how fast the years have passed. I am becoming an old man. Humbling to recognise that someone might be interested in reading about my 50 years as a Jesuit.

I am alive and well because of so many people I met along the way. There is a wonderful Bantu proverb in Ubuntu philosophy that says “I am because we are.” It means that one’s life and work is made up of a tapestry of relationships and human connections from conception to death. I am, because of the love and kindness of so many. I have learned what I know from others on the way and I am still learning.

I attended Mungret College in Limerick for the last two years of my secondary education. It was a moment of change for me meeting some wonderful Jesuits and also encountering some eccentric ones. Being a farmer’s son from West Limerick I wanted to do a degree in agricultural science until I had what I would call a conversion retreat, at the end of my sixth year at school. It was led by a Jesuit, Dom Hendrick. He introduced me to the person Jesus in a way that turned my life upside down.

I joined the Jesuits in 1971, as an 18-year-old, much to the surprise of my friends since joining a religious order even in the ‘70s was not a popular choice of vocation. My early formation was marked by the wonderful influence of a man called Joe Dargan our Novice master - a great human being who had deep respect and patience for the awkward searching and growth of a

young man. In the turbulence of the ‘70s more men left the Society of Jesus than joined. Most of my contemporaries left and everything was in flux.

KEY MOMENTS IN MY 50 YEARS

Accompanying People with Leprosy in the Village of Peace in Tanzania

The wonderful gift of the Jesuit formation is the discernment with the individual in how the God-given talents and desires of the person can be harnessed for the greater glory of God. I was blessed to have such discerning Superiors. And my deep desire to become a missionary in Eastern Africa was fulfilled in 1979.

As a student (or scholastic in Jesuit terminology) I arrived in Tanzania, Eastern Africa. As a student of political science in College I was in awe of President Julius Nyerere who was the founder of East African socialism. He envisaged building up his new nation from the foundations that was based on the philosophy of Ujamaa which translates as ‘familyhood’.

The operating principle of this type of philosophy and state is rooted in the spirit of the first Christian community *‘the faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared*

out the proceeds among themselves according to what each needed’ (Acts 3.4).

This vision of Nyerere was never fulfilled but the underlying values of sharing and generosity remain part of Tanzanian culture. I had a profound experience of this Ujamaa type of living in my work with a community of people with leprosy who lived in our parish. These people tended one another with actions full of care - binding up each other’s bleeding leg and hand wounds with bandages - a wonderful metaphor for the Christian life.

Walking with People who Lived and Died with HIV/AIDS

I returned to Ireland for theology and ordination and went on to further studies in Belgium. I returned to Africa in 1986 where after some work in formation I was sent to work in our church in Mwanza on the banks of Lake Victoria in Tanzania. At this time HIV/AIDS became known as a killer disease. It was at that time a death sentence, unlike today when with the proper medical care it can be treated. In the Lake Victoria Region a 15% HIV rate existed, mostly affecting young people.

Working with people with HIV and accompanying many in their death was a profound human and spiritual experience for a young priest. I was called to ‘bind up the wounds’ of my brothers and sisters, many of whom wanted to end their lives when they heard they were infected by the virus. Our role in the Church at that time was to break through the walls of shame and secrecy and reach out in compassion and healing to the suffering and their families. I received the grace of compassion from my young brothers and sisters who lived with and died of AIDS.

Upendo School and Accompanying Refugee Communities

In 1991 I was missioned to Kenya, where I worked in the parish of St Joseph the Worker, in the Kangemi slum of Nairobi. The makeshift, unplanned

nature of the slum meant that people there lived in dehumanising conditions without adequate sanitation, leaving them vulnerable to infection from communicable diseases. The community spirit in this parish was moving and together we opened a technical training college, a clinic, a primary school, and women's projects for arts and crafts. HIV and AIDS affected many families and we decided to open a special school for the orphans of parents who had HIV or who had died from AIDS. We called it the "Upendo School" – *upendo* means love. It became the access school to our primary school and over the years it has given hundreds of children who may have been forced to live on the streets, other options.

At this time also the Rwandan Genocide took place and hundreds of refugees flooded into the overcrowded slum. The spirit of welcome and generosity of the local people was truly moving. The poor were reaching out to those who were even poorer and this was done in a spirit of welcome and deep joy. The living gospel of the poor really struck me on the chin and shook me to the core. How can one have a depth of generosity and joy in giving when one has little to give? The community continued to prompt me to question my false assumptions about life.

Finding Hope in Situations Beyond Hope

In 1996 I began working with Jesuit Refugee Service in the Burundian camps in Tanzania and later in South and North Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Witnessing the cruelty and devastation that war and conflict causes in the lives of innocent people, exposed me to both the depths of the cruelty of humanity, and also its greatness. Accompanying people who were living with immense suffering and who still wanted to forgive and let go of bitterness and hatred was a balm for my soul.

I experienced working with refugees in war zones both traumatic and grace-

filled because many of the people I worked with had lost relatives in conflict, and were widows and orphans. People who lived with tremendous amounts of grief, but also tremendous amounts of hope. People wanted to forgive rather than avenge especially women and mothers.

They taught me that God works in the darkest places and circumstances. These women and mothers -the victims of war - gave me hope. Hope that our world can move beyond conflict and war, find light even in the darkness and have a depth of joy in the midst of sadness. 'In hopelessness we find hope' was a lesson shared by the innocent suffering around me.

Education is the Key to Freedom and Development and Peace

The Swahili proverb *elimu ni ufunguo wa uhuru, maendeleo na amani* (education is the key to freedom, development and peace) is a living mantra for me. Providing young people with access to education affirms their

gifts, rights and dignity and by doing so, helps people, especially women, to take control of their own lives. This is also the Jesuit mantra - holistic education develops great human beings - people who can move beyond the traps of their history and shape and build a better world.

The work of Jesuit Refugee Service in providing education in the camps I worked in in East Africa and in camps around the world is a testament to that. Graduates from our refugee schools are now the teachers of peace in their home countries in many parts of Africa.

The Ubuntu proverb – I am because we are - is true today as it was when I was born. We continue to grow as human beings and Christians to the extent that we reach out and support one another in the winding road of life. When we do that, the grace of consolation touches our lives even in the midst of desolation.

Fr John Guiney SJ, Director of Irish Jesuits International.

Accompanying Young Adults in Zambia/Malawi

Peter Carroll SJ has spent his life in Zambia and Malawi leading novices, fellow Jesuits and laypeople in their spiritual formation.

After serving Mass for some years at the Dominican church in Sligo, I might have joined the Order of Preachers, but instead chose the Jesuits who had taught me in secondary school. Perhaps not a surprising choice given that a grand-uncle had died as a Jesuit scholastic in 1909. In 1938 one of his sisters - Aunt Hannah, whom I never met – led a group of four



'Foundresses' of Carmel to Kenya. She died in 1964 and is buried in the Carmelite Monastery in Nairobi. Two uncles also became Jesuits - and their first cousin, who found his last resting place in Paraguay.

Zambia Calling

During years of study at UCD and philosophy at Milltown Park I asked the then Provincial three years in a row to be sent to Zambia. He was famed for his oft-repeated conviction that the Jesuits

in Ireland needed to 'consolidate at home' and during his tenure had not sent any scholastic 'on the Missions.' However one of his consultants exerted pressure and I was sent to Zambia just as Fr Cecil McGarry became Provincial in 1968.

At the time Zambia had a population of over four million – there are now 18 million plus. The Irish Jesuits worked largely in the Diocese of Monze, in the Tonga-speaking south, and had limited contact with Jesuits of other nationalities further north. However, in December 1969, Fr General Pedro Arrupe decided, despite some misgivings of the men on the ground, to unite all the Jesuits in Zambia into one Vice-Province (later Province).

Fr John Counihan became Provincial. Before I left Zambia to study theology in Dublin and in Louvain, he asked me to study psychology in the future. I have wondered in this Ignatian Year if this was a 'cannonball moment' – it certainly helped shape my future life.

On return to Zambia in 1976 and after a few years learning Nyanja and gaining some experience in parish work and hospital ministry, I was to spend more than 25 years in the work of formation of Jesuits and diocesan priests. During eight years as novice-

master in the 1980s, the novices came from many countries, from Sudan and Ethiopia in the north to South Africa in the south. You might ask how a non-African could enter the minds and hearts of numerous young people of such a variety of backgrounds and cultures. No easy matter, but in God's Providence many persevered to become leaders in various Jesuit ministries.

Malawi – The Warm Heart of Africa

The 1990s were spent as rector of the national Major Seminary in Zomba, Malawi. It was an exciting time which saw the fall from power of the dictatorial Kamuzu Banda and the advent of multi-party democracy in the 'Warm Heart of Africa,' as Malawi is known. Sometimes when I compare myself with other Jesuits or with Irish missionaries who have given outstanding service in social transformation in various countries, I find consolation in the social activism of the generation of priests whom the talented staff of St Peter's Zomba nurtured all those years ago.

Lusaka and Kitwe

After a time as the Provincial's delegate for Formation (of young Jesuits) and two further spells at the Jesuit

Novitiate in Lusaka, I was asked to begin a Centre of Ignatian Spirituality. There followed some years of giving the Spiritual Exercises and training spiritual directors - laypeople and religious in about equal numbers. Unfortunately, this work did not continue when I was transferred to Kitwe in 2012.

Kitwe, the second city of Zambia in terms of population (600,000 and rising), is Bemba-speaking although many people understand Nyanja. One of the blessings of our Centre in Kitwe where I mainly give the Spiritual Exercises, provide counsel and work in safeguarding is that a good part of the work is with young people, third-level students and those discerning a vocation to religious or priestly life. It is a joy to see them grow while integrating their dreams in the fast-changing reality of today.

A Long and Healthy Life

One of my great-grandfathers remembered the Great Wind of 1839 and lived to the age of 99; another was 96 when he died. God has blessed me with good health so I look forward joyfully to further years of Jesuit life and ministry. What has sustained me? Many things, not least the gift of friendship – among them Jesuits, former Jesuits, my own family and many others.

The Work of Many Hands

Mikono Refugee Craft Shop has been badly affected by the lack of tourism in Kenya. The shop sells high quality craft items to support people from a refugee background.

People who become refugees have left behind their homes, possessions and livelihoods and arrived in a new country without the means to support themselves or their families. But what they have brought with them is their culture and heritage, and often they have traditional skills which can be

used to produce high quality traditional crafts.

Mikono Refugee Craft Shop in Nairobi, Kenya was established as part of a programme by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) to help refugees to earn money by making and selling traditional crafts. The word 'mikono' means 'hands' in Swahili, because

the work of many hands goes into producing the wares.

It has 75 suppliers - of more than 10 different nationalities – who are from a refugee background and now live in or around Nairobi. The shop has been in existence since 1993, but its sales have suffered in the last couple of years because the Covid-19 pandemic meant that there were no tourists in Kenya to buy its African crafts.

High Quality Craft Items

The shop has a select range of high-quality craft items, which are hand

made using traditional methods. Its homewares collection includes table mats, woven baskets and hand carved wooden serving spoons. It sells some women's clothing and accessories such as bangles, earrings and handbags. There is also a small selection of children's toys.

The shop's Patchwork Collection was born when Triphose, a refugee in Kenya who tailored for a living couldn't afford to buy raw materials. Walking through the streets of Kibera, she noticed all the scraps being tossed away by other shops. She started to collect the scraps, until she had gathered enough to make a quilt.

Since then, Triphose has supplied Mikono shop with beautiful patchwork items including aprons, quilts, cushion covers and clothing. Her resilience in the face of adversity is a good example of how the artisans who supply the

shop use not only their crafting skills but also their determination to forge a living to survive in their adopted homeland.

Online Sales Now Faster and More Affordable

Mikono Refugee Craft Shop has a website www.mikono.jrs.global and a Facebook page www.facebook.com/mikonocraftshop making it possible to order online, but delivery from Kenya to a market was expensive and slow. To speed up the process, and bring down postage costs, JRS has now established warehouses for Mikono Craft Shop goods in locations around the world, including Ireland.

Irish Jesuits International buys Christmas cards from the shop each year. Last year we had many compliments on the unique design of our cards, which were made by



Wycliffe, a refugee from Rwanda who hand makes each one. If you would like to order some handmade African Christmas cards for this year, please get in touch with reception@iji.ie

Mikono Refugee Craft Shop is a non-profit social enterprise. JRS bears the cost for all of its overheads so that the artisans who supply the crafts earn 100% of the price of each item. The effect of the Covid-19 restrictions on sales means that the refugees earned little or nothing from their goods during this time. Give them your support to get back on their feet.

IJI ETHIOPIA APPEAL

Donate to help displaced people in the Tigray region of Ethiopia with food, bedding and basic hygiene supplies.

The violent conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia is worsening, making the need for basic supplies more intense. Food is badly needed, but these people who have been forced from their homes also need mattresses and blankets to sleep on, soap to wash with and girls and women need sanitary supplies.



For donations online log onto:

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Ethiopia Appeal Area of greatest need

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