

There is little doubt that Robert Plunkett died in 1661. His will, which was probably proved in 1662, was destroyed in the Public Record Office in 1922. A funeral entry of "Richard Plunkett of Rathmore" who died on 23 October, 1661, and was buried three days later in St. Audeon's¹⁷ is probably a mistake for Robert. The entry has the arms of the deceased and his wife who was a Segrave and they are identical with the arms on the funeral entry of Elinor Segrave, the wife of Robert Plunkett. She died in 1639 and was buried in St. Audeon's. The absence of any other contemporary reference to a Richard Plunkett and a Segrave wife strengthens the probability of a mistake of Richard for Robert. It was left to Angelo Plunkett, the grandson of Robert, to continue the struggle for the recovery of the Rathmore property. On 12 March, 1662, at the Court of Claims Angelo entered his plea as an Innocent Papist,¹⁸ but few of the claims were heard. Four years later a list was furnished to Ormond whence to select nominees for restoration. It included

Robert Plunkett of Rathmore his
grandsonne Angell Plunkett judged
Innocent and left to the law for his title.¹⁹

Prior to the Cromwellian confiscation Walter Plunkett, the younger brother of Robert Plunkett, was the proprietor of 350 acres at Derrypatrick. Nothing further appears to be known about Angelo Plunkett for almost thirty years. An inquisition at Trim on 4th October, 1694, found that Angelo Plunkett, late of Rathmore, was on 6 April, 1691, indicted for treason, and that he was in possession of 600 acres at Kiltale and 10 acres near Derrypatrick by virtue of a lease to Ignatius Plunkett from Elizabeth Jackson for 39 years from 1 November, 1682.²¹ She was probably a relative of Arthur, John and Thomas Juxon, adventurers who drew lots of land in the barony of Deece.²¹ It will be recalled that Robert Plunkett of Rathmore had a son Ignatius who appears to have been the Ignatius Plunkett of Derrypatrick who made his will on 2 June, 1688. It mentioned his nephew Angelo Plunkett, his wife Ellinor, his cousin Thomas Plunkett Fitz Walter and his nephew John Plunkett.²² The will of Thomas, son of Robert Plunkett of Rathmore, made or proved in 1699 has not survived.²³

FOOTNOTES

1. For Thomas Plunkett and his career see *Reportorium Novum*, III. 108-20.
2. *C.S.P.I.*, 1596-7, 325.
3. *Fiantis Eliz.* 6227.
4. *C.S.P.I.* 1599-1600, 33.
5. *H.M.C. Salisbury*, x. 96.
6. *C.S.P.I.* 1601-3, 133.
7. *H.M.C. Salisbury*, xii, 93-4.
8. *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariae... repertorium*, Meath, 74 Jac. I.
9. *Dowdall Deeds*, 675.
10. *The Segrave Family*, 124.
11. *Prendergast Mss.* II, 334.
12. *T.C.D. Ms. F.3.* 18.
13. *Proc. R.I.A.* xxvc. 49.
14. *C.S.P.I.* 1660-2, 143.
15. *C.S.P.I.* 1642-59, 343.
16. *15th Report from the Commissioners... Public Records of Ireland*, 147.
17. *Funeral Entries*, Vol. 4, 65, Ulster Office.
18. *19th Report, D.K.R.*, 47. The claim was made by Angell Plunkett and Francis son of John to estates in Meath and Dublin, and from this and the following it would appear that John, the eldest son of Robert, was dead.
19. *Prendergast Mss.* iv. 478-84.
20. *Exchequer Inquisitions*, Meath, 91, 101, in Public Records Office.
21. *C.S.P.I.* 1642-59, 343.
22. *Betham Extracts*, 58, 20, in P.R.O.
23. *Vicars, Index to Prerogative Wills.*

THE DOMINICANS OF TRIM 1713-1833

HUGH FENNING, O.P.

SOME YEARS after the exile of the regular clergy in 1698 the Dominicans of Trim gradually returned to resume community life in secret, though not to the town of Trim itself. They found a more secluded place, their *locus refugii*, near Killyon, between the Boyne and the public road, about one hundred yards upstream from the now ruined castle of Donore (O.S. 1 inch, sheet 100, D7). At present the site is overgrown but the careful visitor can find in the rank grass the base of the convent wall and the broken tomb-stone of Father Francis Lynagh (d. 1750). Within the same field stand three old apple trees, still bearing fruit in 1955, which presumably represent the friary orchard. To this spot, about seven miles from their rightful home in Trim, the Dominicans returned early in the 18th century, and there they lived until they abandoned the foundation a century later.

It is very hard to date their arrival exactly. The Dominican historian O'Heyne, writing in 1706, noted that a Fr. Dominic Nugent of the Trim community was then active in Ireland, but it is impossible to identify this priest with any other of the same name or to decide whether he, in fact, worked near Trim, and not, for instance, in Tipperary. There is another clue in the return of Fr. John Dillon in 1710, but again there is no evidence that he came to the area of his former convent. The picture grows a little clearer with the arrival of Fr. Peter Gogerty by 1713, something we know only from a silver chalice now in the Maynooth museum. This chalice, the property of the parish of Tullamore, bears the inscription: "*Ora pro anima Frs. Petri Gogerty prior Trimmenses qui me fieri fecit 1713*," or in English: "Pray for the soul of Br. Peter Gogerty prior of Trim, who had me made in 1713." Dean Cogan did not decide whether this chalice belonged to the Franciscan community of Trim at Courtown or to the Dominicans of Trim at Donore, nor has anyone decided since. The simplest approach to the question is to look at the published list of the Franciscan guardians of Trim in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* of 1913, pp. 488-9. There we see that James Lestrangle was guardian in 1713, and that the name of Peter Gogerty does not appear at any date from 1629 to 1819. Then there is the title "prior," the correct Dominican title for a local superior, for which the Franciscans use the title "guardian." And finally, the name of Peter Gogerty is that of a priest who was twice subprior of Trim before the exile and is listed as a member of that Dominican Community in 1695. The solution in favour of the Dominicans is clear but it leaves a puzzle unsolved, for the six facets of the pedestal of the chalice are decorated with a crucifixion and the portraits of five saints, some of whom are recognizably Franciscan.

For the next step in this reconstruction we must follow Dean Cogan, who had access to documents no longer available and was one hundred years closer to the subject than are we. "Early in the 18th century a farm was set to the community by Mr. Ashe, a Protestant gentleman, at Donore, a few miles from Trim. A house was erected here which answered the purpose of a convent, and over this presided a prior who was tenant of the farm and pastor of the adjoining parishes. . . . It was a retreat for the secular clergy, many of whom entered the Order and spent here the evening of their lives." (Vol. 1:308). The problem is to decide the date at which they acquired Donore. As the Rev. Dr. Moran has shown in the previous issue of this journal, Dr. Fagan, bishop

of Meath, sponsored the opening of four friaries in his diocese at some date before 1729. The coincidence that chalices were made in 1713 both for the Franciscans of Multyfarnham and the Dominicans of Donore offers some grounds for dating the bishop's generous act in that year, especially since that was his first in charge of the diocese. But we must bear in mind that such houses of refuge were frequently nomadic in their early years, moving from place to place as circumstances required.

These foundations made by Dr. Fagan are known from a letter written in 1738 by his successor, the Dominican Dr. MacEgan. Speaking of the friars the writer goes on to say: "Now they have neither convents nor houses to betake themselves to, especially since 1732 when all the magistrates of the county threw the four friaries to the ground and captured a friar of eighty who could not run away. After mistreating him they threw him into prison where after a few months he died." These events were repeated in 1735, particularly at Trim, Athlone, and Multyfarnham, because in confession one of the friars had counselled a girl to leave a magistrate with whom she had been living. Under these unsettling circumstances it is not surprising that the life of the Dominicans at Donore was a hidden and hunted one. Nevertheless the Provincial's report on the friary in 1738 noted that it was "well-regulated", and had a community of six with the charge of the parish.

Dean Cogan mentions that many of the secular clergy joined the Order at Donore. One of these priests was Fr. Francis Lynagh who died a centenarian in 1750, having finished his life as a Dominican after a spell of more than thirty years as a parish priest. Fr. Vincent Laurence Cusack who died at Donore in 1732 at the age of 72 may have been another, for he seems to have been the Fr. James Cusack who received the Dominican habit in Rome in 1717 as a secular priest. But no other examples are known.

The number of priests forming the community at Donore, which stood at six in 1738, remained fairly constant until the end of the century. Thus there were seven in 1756 (Burke: *Hibernia Dominicana*), six in 1767 (Provincial Netterville's list sent to the Master General), six in 1782 (list in *Archivum Hibernicum*, vol. VIII, of those who registered in that year), and three in 1800 (Vane: *Memoirs of Viscount Castlereagh*, vol. 4, p. 106). This latter number heralded the extinction of the small community, and forms part of the larger pattern common to most country friaries of the time.

The work done by the friars of Donore was on at least four levels. Primarily they staffed a friary, committed to public Masses and confessions, to the recitation in common of the Divine Office, and to the work of preaching from fixed points in the neighbourhood. This also entailed, on the financial side, the regular collection of alms, termed "the quest". Then there was the parochial aspect, since the prior was parish priest of Killaconnigan and Killyon, or of Ballivor and Kildalkey as the part of it nearer to Donore is now called. Other members of the community were parish priests of outlying parishes such as Galtrim, Nobber, Rathmolyon and Longwood. Some acted as private chaplains to the more wealthy local families of Cruisetown, Summerhill, etc. Still more acted as curates or preached occasional sermons at diocesan conferences. From 1773, as also before 1751, the friars were allowed to train aspirants to the Order. And then by 1789, when novices were no longer numerous, the friars of Donore opened an academy for boys. The study of these various activities has much to teach us about the life of the friars in 18th century Ireland, and about the currents which pulled them to this side and that as they

struggled, unsuccessfully, to survive. By the end of that century, apart from a few hardy exceptions, the country friary was extinct and the friars lived on with great difficulty in the towns.

PARISH WORK

Killaconnigan and Killyon, the large parish in which their friary stood, was administered from about 1720 by one of the community, for Dean Cogan claims (Vol. IX, p. 377) in reference to Rathmolyon that after the death of Fr. John O'Reilly in 1722 that parish was served from the friary of Donore; and in speaking of Killyon (Vol. II, p. 366) that that parish was also served from Donore after the death of Fr. Dominic Farrell who registered as parish priest of Castlerickard in 1704 at the age of 37. The parish of Killyon, sometimes called Donore, appears to have then included Ballivor, Kildalkey and Longwood. In 1793 Longwood was formed into a separate parish, taking in part of Castlerickard, Rathcore, and Clonard. Consequently the parish priest of Killyon found his base at Donore no longer in the centre of a large parish but on the southern fringe of a smaller one and moved northwards to a small church near Ballivor.

Supposing Fr. Dominic Farrell to have lived as parish priest of Killyon until c. 1720 it should be possible to draw up a list of the successive pastors. However we do not know of any until the unknown date of appointment of Fr. Francis Lynagh, who died at an immense age in 1750. Burke (author in 1762 of *Hibernia Dominicana*) lists Fr. Thomas Hussey as parish priest of Donore in 1756, thus making him in all probability the immediate successor to Fr. Lynagh. This priest registered himself in 1783 as pastor of Killyon, being then eighty-four years of age. Curiously, in July 1782 Fr. Michael Fleming, O.P., also registered himself as pastor of Donore, perhaps because he was *de facto* in charge of the parish in view of Fr. Hussey's age. Fr. Fleming died in 1793 and it was after his death that the division of the unwieldy parish took place. Fr. Laurence Shaw took the northern parts above Killyon and Fr. Thomas Hitchcock the southern area about Longwood. Fr. Shaw died as pastor in 1833 and Fr. Hitchcock was removed from office in 1810. Both were succeeded by secular priests.

Of the other Dominicans who served parishes no complete list is possible. Thus we cannot say what priest of the community was pastor of Rathmolyon from 1722, nor what parish was entrusted to Fr. Thomas Curtis whom Burke vaguely describes in 1756 as a parish priest in the diocese of Meath. More definite information is available for Fr. William Cruice of Nobber c. 1770, Frs. James Flynn and Patrick Hart of Rathmolyon (c. 1750-67-97), Fr. Patrick Lynham of Galtrim (d. 1759), and Fr. Michael Egan of Summerhill (d. 1826). The details, such as they are in each case, may be seen in the biographical dictionary following this article. Taken together, their work represents a considerable contribution to the running of the diocese and may be in fact the most remarkable example of this phenomenon in Ireland so far as the Dominican Order is concerned.

Early in the 18th century the diocesan clergy were too few to meet the demand for parish priests and parishes tended to be much larger than is now the case. Consequently the friars, who grew rapidly in numbers from their return (c. 1715) until about 1760, were morally forced to help the secular clergy in work which was not properly theirs. Many did so under obedience; others were prompted by the purest motives of generosity; but at the same time some

may have seen in this opportunity a chance to live in relative comfort and independence, freed from the danger and social stigma of being a "rambling friar." That century in any case was one in which the Jesuits were suppressed and religious orders were in disfavour, even in Catholic circles on the continent. Whatever the motives of the majority may have been, the friars paid for their action by the loss of their friaries. The friaries, naturally, were understaffed since so many of their legal members were living in parishes, and eventually in many cases were altogether abandoned. With the founding of colleges at Maynooth, Carlow, and Kilkenny, all of which began to train priests in the late 18th century, the friars were no longer needed in parishes and were slowly replaced. Thus they were left neither with convents, parishes, nor any means of subsistence whatsoever, at least in country districts. This process of decay began with the decree of 1751 forbidding the reception of novices in Ireland and ran its course until about 1840.

The whole problem was a vicious circle for the regulars. Their convents were understaffed because too many friars were serving parishes. Because they were understaffed many of their rural houses were closed. Their novices (whom they were again allowed to receive after 1773) could not easily be trained at home because so many priories had been lost and those which remained were always short of funds. Nor could their novices be trained abroad in any number because their foreign houses of study had been closed by revolution, and few candidates could afford the expense of travel. And even should a novice persevere to ordination, where could he find a livelihood except in the towns or in America? Fifty years after Catholic emancipation the regular Orders in Ireland were only beginning to find their strength, reviving from a sort of living death brought on in great measure, however necessarily and unwittingly, by friar pastors such as those in the friary of Donore. But one must add, in all truth, that poverty among the clergy, both regular and secular, was the basic underlying cause of the whole problem, and that widespread emigration from country parts made rural friaries impracticable in some areas.

FRIARY AND NOVITIATE

In the ecclesiastical disputes of the 18th century frequent accusations may be found that the friaries were religious houses in name alone and that the common life of prayer and preaching that they were supposed to preserve was more a legal fiction than a fact. Making due allowance for the exaggerations of controversy it still appears that "regular life" in Irish convents was often below continental standards, and under the circumstances it could hardly have been otherwise. Persecution did not end until about 1750, and until active persecution had passed every appearance of religious life had to be suppressed. At no time during the century could friars wear the religious habit. The holding of a common purse was not usual. And the numbers drawn off to supply parishes often made it impossible for the others in a priory to fulfil their obligation to common recitation of the Divine Office. It is obvious too that even when opportunities improved the dead weight of custom lay against the adoption or return to monastic usages. It was for these reasons that the Congregation of Propaganda refused to permit Irish noviciates after 1751.

Before the appearance of this decree the better organised and more peaceful convents could receive novices for a year after which they were, if suitable, ordained and sent abroad to study, apparently on the grounds that their Mass-stipends would pay for their keep. Thus Fr. Francis Lynagh of Donore

(d. 1750) is described as a master of novices, and in itself the choice of Donore for such a purpose was a compliment to the relatively high standard of community life to be found there, and bears out the Provincial's encomium of 1738 that it was "well-regulated". But after 1751, the year of the decree, we can notice Donore's loss of status in the death at Naples in 1753 of Br. Gearald Nangle of the convent of Trim (Donore), or in the case of Br. Michael Fleming, a native of Donore, who left to make his noviciate at Louvain in 1755. In July, 1773 this decree was modified and the Dominicans were allowed one noviciate for each of the four provinces. Donore was chosen for the province of Leinster; Dr. Cheevers agreed to its erection in the following year; and it appears to have played this part until at least 1788. But I have found only one priest who was trained there—Fr. Thomas Murray who completed his studies in the convent and was ordained at Navan in April 1788. The loss of all the convent books has made further investigation impossible. What does seem clear is that with the opening of an academy for boys at Donore in 1789 the friars abandoned their noviciate. With this school they could perhaps find a steady income, meet an urgent need, and educate boys who might after the course of years become Dominicans themselves.

THE ACADEMY OF DONORE

The only source of information on this school are two advertisements for it in the *Dublin Evening Post* of January 1st, 1789 and the 16th of April following, the first of which Fr. John Brady has published in full in *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. XIX, p. 264. For the sake of easy reference it would be better to print it again here.

"THE ACADEMY OF DONORE IN THE COUNTY OF MEATH

The gentlemen of Donore who for upwards thirty years past have been engaged in the education of youth, beg leave to inform their friends and the public that on the 12th January next they intend to open their academy on an enlarged plan. The English, Latin, Greek, French, and Italian languages, Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Mathematics, Geography, History, and the use of globes, will be taught in a manner which, they flatter themselves, cannot but meet with universal approbation.

Two gentlemen of the house assisted by two ushers of approved abilities will constantly attend. Every endeavour shall be exerted to form the minds of their pupils to the practice of virtue, and expedite their progress in the languages and sciences; also the strictest attention paid to their diet, health, and cleanliness. The very moderate terms on which this plan is proposed must convince the public that their advantage is the principal object which the gentlemen of Donore have in view.

Terms: Twenty guineas a year for board and tuition, with washing included and one guinea entrance. Music and dancing to be paid for apart. For further particulars application may be made to the Rev. Geo. Fleming, Donore, near Clonard; and in Dublin to the Rev. Andrew Dunn, Meath Street, or to Surgeon Rivers, Ushers Quay. December 8, 1788."

The statement that "for upwards thirty years past" the friars had been engaged in the education of youth leaves us with the option of taking this as a reference to their noviciate or as evidence that a school had been under their direction since 1755. The "new and enlarged plan" of 1789 may have been no more than the material changes involved in turning the noviciate

accommodation into a school; and the ordination of their only identifiable novice in the previous year makes this explanation the more likely of the two. The second advertisement in April adds only that the academy would open again after Easter, and refers to handbills giving terms, etc., which could be obtained "at Mr. Boyce's, Bookseller, Merchant's Quay—in Mullingar at the Rev. Mr. Laurence Fitzgerald's—in Drogheda at the Rev. Mr. MacDonagh's, or at the academy." Fr. Vincent Leahy, writing in the *Newbridge Quarterly*, Christmas 1947, observes how the Fathers of Donore were in this case availing of the Repeal Act of 1782 which for the first time made such academies legal.

Apart from these two advertisements, nothing is known of the venture.

THE END: 1790–1833

There is every reason to believe that the ambitious academy did not long survive its opening, and the later history of the friary with its ever-dwindling staff is also one of failure. By 1812 when Larkin's *Map of Meath* marked the "Old Friary" at Donore, it appears to have been abandoned. In their role as parish priests two of its members, Fr. Laurence Shaw of Ballivor and Fr. Thomas Hitchcock of Longwood lived on for twenty years, but the house at Donore was closed. However, some incidents from its final twenty years of life have been preserved.

In July 1797 Fr. Shaw was appointed vicar of Donore by a Provincial Chapter at Dublin. Dean Cogan (Vol. III, p. 215) published the letter from the chapter to Dr. Plunkett, bishop of Meath, on the occasion, but unfortunately the chapter which appointed Fr. Shaw was schismatical and in time its acts were annulled. The incident does not reflect too badly on Fr. Shaw but serves to show that on this occasion his sympathies lay with a group of Dominicans in Dublin and Meath who tried to force their will on the rest of their Irish brethren.

In October of the following year, the year of the rebellion, the friary was the scene of a dramatic incident. Dr. Plunkett was staying the night during his visitation of the diocese when "an attempt was made by armed ruffians to get into the house, no doubt to rob it. They knew I was there (wrote the bishop) and said 'I ought not to preach against liberty.' The gentlemen within were determined to defend the garrison. Of this the robbers were convinced and after a boisterous parley of half-an-hour departed, regretting 'that they had not got my benediction'. I was not altogether at my ease during the interval; fatigue however or laziness prevailed over my fears. I did not stir from my bed. This unpleasant visit was paid on the 17th October after midnight. It was generally believed that we would all have been robbed had the villains got into the house." The full letter to Dr. Troy of which this forms a part was published by Dr. Moran in *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, Vol. III, p. 609. It reveals how opposed to the rebellion this worthy prelate was, and forms a possible link with the murder of Rev. George Knipe of Castlerickard, a Protestant, eighteen months before. For our more narrow purpose it may be of interest to note the word "garrison" used by the bishop. It could well be metaphorical, but it does possibly suggest that the actual castle of Donore, which is still intact, was then used for dwelling quarters by the community. Larkin's map shows only one small building which seems too small for a friary and boarding school.

From the list compiled in 1800 for Government use and published in the *Memoirs of Viscount Castlereagh* (ed. Vane) Vol. IV, p. 106, we learn that the convent of Donore then housed only three friars, who had the care of souls.

After that silence descends to be broken almost twenty years later by a letter in the Dominican archives at Tallaght, Co. Dublin. In September 1818 a casual line of gossip ushers the name of Donore for the last time onto the pages of Dominican history. "Mr. Dempsey, a young man destined for the convent of Donore, has been sent back unordained from Lisbon by Mr. Ryan the Rector." This youth was a native of Thomastown, Co. Kildare, and may have had some contact with the friars of Donore. He was ordained eventually and spent most of his zealous and active life in the priory of Dublin. No further attempt was made to revive the convent; its books and papers were not preserved, and there remains to remind us of its existence only the chalice with which Fr. Peter Gogerty first founded it. There is also, of course, a fine commemorative slab in the old church at Killyon which records the names of six members of the community for the years 1737–89. But since the tombstone of Fr. Francis Lynagh is at Donore, it may be presumed that all six were buried about their friary. Thus they have themselves been forgotten and the rank grass grows and rots above their unmarked graves.

NOTES

(1) The house of refuge at Donore founded by friars from Trim is not to be confused with the house of refuge at another Donore founded by Dominican friars from Drogheda. The Donore near Drogheda is on a hill overlooking the Boyne two miles south-west of the town. The Donore near Killyon is marked on the Ordnance Survey, one inch to the mile, sheet 100, D 7.

(2) The papers confiscated from a Dominican Provincial, Fr. Fottrel, c. 1740, which have been published in the *Louth Archaeological Journal*, 1930, contains a note on Trim.

"St. Mary's, Trim: Three silver chalices. Few ornaments [vestments?]. Six sons at home; one is a preacher general and one a master in theology. Well regulated. Has pastoral charge and [questing] bounds that are not to be despised."

The preacher general, one entitled to preach outside the bounds of his own convent territory, was Fr. Francis Lynagh; the master in theology probably Fr. James Dillon.

There is another note in reference to a controversy with the priory of Dublin concerning parishes in which both convents claimed the right to quest. A Fr. Patrick MacCabe gave evidence that in the time of Charles II and James II (1660–1690) the Dublin friars had indeed quested in the disputed parishes but had later abandoned them to Trim. A further note from the Master General orders a questing agreement between Trim and Drogheda to be observed. There is also evidence, though from another source, that during the first half of the century the friars of Trim (Donore) quested in the name and for the use of the priory of Mullingar. Such a quest was made, for instance, by a Fr. Thomas Geraghty in 1747.

(3) Three lists of the members of the community. In each case they signify the assignation of individuals to the convent rather than their actual residence in it.

(i) Fr. Thomas Burke lists the community for 1756 in his *Hibernia Dominicana*. Patrick Lynham, prior. Michael Wynne, Thomas Hussey, Thomas Curtis, Philip O'Reilly, William Cruise, Vincent Coffey.

(ii) Fr. Netterville, Provincial, lists the community for 1767 in his account of the Province for the Master General. Thomas Hussey, prior. Michael Fleming, sub-prior, Patrick Hart, William Cruise, Philip O'Reilly, John Cruise.

(iii) The registration of clergy in 1782–83 connects the names of six priests with Donore. The lists may be found in *Archivum*

Hibernicum, Vol. VIII. Michael Fleming, Michael Brennan, James Herbert, Thomas Hitchcock, Peter Lynch, Thomas Hussey.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF PRIESTS

AFFILIATED TO DONORE, 1720-1833

BRENNAN, MICHAEL. He was ordained in 1756 by the bishop of Tulana but by 1764 he had moved to Rome where he taught philosophy and eventually directed studies in the Irish convent of SS. Sixtus and Clement. He was prior of that community from 1769 to 1772, leaving for Ireland in the following year and arriving at Donore by July 1775. There he lived until his death (which is recorded in the Provincial chapter acts of 1801) and during these years he was granted the title of master in theology.

BRENNAN, WALTER. This priest, the younger brother of Fr. Michael Brennan (above), is not known to have worked in Donore, but was received to the habit in Rome for that convent on March 7th, 1773.

COFFEY, VINCENT. Although this priest studied at Louvain he is not known to have been ordained there. Before his return to Ireland about the year 1754 he had qualified as a teacher of theology. In 1756 he was assigned to Donore but by 1763 he had been transferred to Naas, of which convent he had since 1761 been the preacher general. By 1767 he had been appointed parish priest of his native place, Tyrellscross (Tyrellspass, Fertullagh), County Westmeath, but maintained his Dominican connections by questing in 1777 for the convent of Mullingar, ranging even as far as Ballymore despite opposition by the diocesan clergy. He had been elected prior of Newbridge (Naas) in 1773 but does not appear to have lived there. He seems to have relinquished his parish by 1784 and retired to Lisbon where he died, still legally considered a son of the Naas community. His obit occurs in the chapter acts of 1793.

CRUISE (CRUICE), JOHN. He was assigned to Donore in 1767 and is perhaps identical with the James Cruise noted as recently dead and a member of the Trim community by the chapter acts of 1793.

CRUISE (CRUICE), WILLIAM. Although assigned to Donore in 1756 the later connection of this priest with that convent must have been nominal. He was parish priest of Nobber (Cruisetown), for about ten years before his death, which Dean Cogan dates in 1772. The obit occurs in the chapter acts of 1769. He was buried in the family tomb at Cruisetown.

CURTIS, THOMAS. Prior of Naas in 1734. A member of the Donore community in 1756, being then a pastor in the diocese. He died in Dublin on July 20th, 1758, during an operation for gall-stones.

CUSACK, VINCENT. The tombstone in Killyon churchyard records that this priest of Donore died on the 5th of June, 1737, at the age of 72. Hence the obit of a Fr. Laurence Cusack of Trim in the acts of 1742 may be taken to refer to the same individual. Nevertheless Fr. Vincent Laurence Cusack may also be the Fr. James Cusack, a secular priest, who received the habit in Rome in 1717.

DILLON, JAMES. Died at Donore on May 2nd, 1743, at the age of 84, and is described as a doctor of divinity on his tombstone. But so many of the same name were members of the Order at the same time that no other act in his long life can be ascribed to him with certainty.

EGAN, MICHAEL. His death is entered on the registry of deaths at

Summerhill, 26th September, 1826. Perhaps he was chaplain to some local family.

FAGAN, VINCENT, GARRET. The obit of this priest is entered in the chapter acts of 1793, in which he is described as a member of the community of Trim. Dean Cogan (II: 249) says that he was a native of Kilcumney and officiated for some time in the diocese. He died on the 1st of October, 1792, and is buried in Kilcumney with his friends.

FLEMING, GEORGE. He was trained, and taught theology in the Irish community at Louvain, of which c. 1777 he was elected prior. About 1784 he returned to Donore, probably from Lisbon where he had gone to teach theology, and interested himself in the academy. He died in St. Patrick's hospital, Dublin, founded by Dean Swift for the mentally ill, on June 17th, 1800. In all probability he was brother to Fr. Michael Fleming (below) and therefore a native of Donore.

FLEMING, MICHAEL. Fr. Fleming was born near the convent of Donore and left to join the Order in Louvain c. 1754. There, he made his novitiate and studies. On finishing theology he remained on there to teach philosophy and sacred scripture, returning to Donore c. 1765. Within two years he had been appointed sub-prior and was described in an official report by his Provincial as "an indefatigable preacher." In recognition of his zeal he was appointed preacher general of Mullingar by the chapter of 1769, a purely nominal appointment, and at the chapters of 1771 and 1781 he represented the convents of Leinster. Dr. Geoghegan, bishop of Meath, and the clergy of Kildare, wrote separate recommendations of Fr. Fleming in 1778, describing him as eminently suitable to rule the diocese of Meath. These documents have been published in the *Archivum Hibernicum*, Vol. VIII, pp. 203 ff. At that time he had been for twelve years a pastor, secretary (to the bishop?), vicar-forane, in charge of conferences, and a synodal examiner—prudent, peaceful, and admired by all. But the appointment did not take place. In 1782 Fr. Fleming registered as parish priest of Killaconnigan and Killyon, being then prior of Donore. In April 1787 he had a fine stone, commemorative of his departed brethren at Donore, erected in the old church of Killyon. On May 3rd, 1793, he died of dropsy at Brunswick Street, Dublin. Dean Cogan says of him: "He was a very distinguished man and was held in great respect by clergy and laity."

Addendum: The account books of the Dominican convent, Drogheda (St. Magdalen's) have the item—"30 May, 1775: Rum and sugar for Mr. Fleming, prior of Donore." Thus he was prior of Donore from c. 1775 until at least 1787.

FLYNN, JAMES. The early life of this priest is difficult to unravel because there was another Dominican of the same name who died in St. Croix, an island in the West Indies, between May 1762 and April 1763. Thus Fr. James Flynn of Donore may not be the priest of that name who was ordained at Louvain in 1743 and was assigned to the convent of Youghal in 1756. In any event he was entrusted in the 1750's with the parish of Rathmolyon in the diocese of Meath, and after some years became vicar-general of the diocese. In this latter capacity he went to Flanders and Paris in the summer of 1765, leaving his parish in the care of Fr. Patrick Hart, O.P., to arrange burses in those parts for students of the diocese. In November of the following year he was falsely but respectfully noted as dead in *Sleator's Gazetteer*. He retired from his parish in 1767, leaving it to the care of Fr. Patrick Hart who was perhaps his curate, and went to live with his brethren at Donore. There on March 17th,

1775, he died at the age of 54. Dean Cogan (II: 377) says of him: "He was one of the most distinguished ecclesiastics of his day and took an active part in all the diocesan movements of that period."

GERAGHTY, THOMAS. From a Mullingar questing dispute late in the 18th century it appears that a Dominican of this name quested in 1747 in the name and for the use of the priory of Mullingar. From this evidence it is possible that he was of the Donore community and a parish priest of the diocese.

HART, PATRICK. Ordained at Ballyshannon by the bishop of Raphoe in 1752 according to the registration of 1782. The date may be too early by a few years since Burke's *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 415, footnote u), mentions the arrival in Rome of a cleric of the same name, a son of the priory of Ballindoone, shortly after 1756. However he was neither received, professed, nor ordained, in Rome, although he made his studies there. By 1765 he had returned to Donore since he was on hand to relieve Fr. Flynn of Rathmolyon in the summer of that year. He succeeded to that parish in September 1767 and cared for it until his death. In 1782 he registered as parish priest of Rathmolyon and Rathcore, living at Rathmolyon. There he appears to have had a holding of 22 acres (cf. "Some Notes on Rathmolyon" by Rev. Canon Athey in *Riocht na Midhe*, Vol. 1, no. 2, 1956). His death occurred on the 20th of October, 1797, at the age of 72, and he was buried in Rathcore churchyard where his tombstone survives. Dean Cogan says of him: "The name of Fr. Hart is still revered in the parish, and his piety, charity, and zeal are still alluded to with gratitude." That testimony was given seventy years after the good priest's death.

HERBERT, JAMES. Ordained at Louvain in 1772, and in 1782 registered as living at Donore.

HITCHCOCK, THOMAS. Ordained at Louvain in 1781 and registered as a member of the Donore friary in the following year. In 1793 he was placed in charge of the newly formed parish of Longwood but in 1810 was suspended by the bishop and led into schism a body of his parishioners. He was in court at Trim in the following year, having got into legal difficulties, but made his submission to the bishop and "on his knees begged pardon for the scandal he had given by his schism." Dean Cogan adds that he later died an edifying death about the year 1831.

HUSSEY, THOMAS. According to the registration of 1782 this priest was ordained in Dublin by Dr. Fagan in 1730. He lived at Donore from at least as early as 1745, having been in 1742 appointed preacher general for the convent of New Ross. He was prior of Donore in 1767 and continued to work there, as parish priest of Killyon (from before 1756), until his death on September 13th, 1786. The age of ninety-seven years attributed to him on the Killyon tombstone is exaggerated, as it usually was in those days with older people, and he is more likely to have been about eight-seven, following his age as given in the Burke and Netterville lists.

LYNAGH, FRANCIS. This priest was ordained for the diocesan clergy at Tuy in Galicia, Spain, in 1686 and registered in 1704 as parish priest of Laracor, Drumlorgan, Gallow, and Agherpallis, being then resident at Umberstown. Hence he may have known Dean Swift who in 1704 administered the same parish of Laracor. About the year 1720 he entered the Dominican Order at Donore where he was many times master of novices and prior. Burke, the Dominican historian, eulogises him as "a man of great maturity and modesty,

a most careful guardian of his eyes and tongue, who daily said, apart from the Divine Office, the whole Office and rosary of Our Lady and the whole Office of the dead." From 1734 he had been preacher general of his convent. He died almost a centenarian, on the 24th November, 1750, and was buried beside his convent of Donore where his broken tombstone may still be seen. He was in touch with the O'Neachtain family of Dublin and their literary circle and some account of this connection may be read in *Eigse*, 1 (1939), p. 197 ff. The wife of Tadgh O'Neachtain wrote a poem in his honour, welcoming him on a visit to Dublin (published in *loc. cit.*) and there is also extant in Trinity College a long letter of his in English written in 1725 to console a friend on the loss of a brother. It reveals an educated and deeply spiritual mind and shows the writer to have read both Cicero and Donne.

LYNCH, PETER. The identity of this priest is known only from the registration of 1782 in which he noted his ordination at Louvain in 1779, his connection with Donore, and his status as curate of Killaconnigan.

LYNHAM, PATRICK. A relation of the Baron of Galtrim and presented by him to that parish before 1756. In that year he was also prior of Donore but died in 1759 (Burke). He may possibly be the Fr. Lynham who was stationed in Drogheda in 1729-31.

McCABE, PATRICK. Confer *Riocht na Mhíde*, Vol. II, No. 3 (1961) p. 5; and add: A priest of the same name was working at Longfield, Dunamoine, Co. Monaghan, in 1743-44, according to W. P. Burke "Irish Priests in Penal Times," p. 295. The two may perhaps be identical.

MURRAY, JAMES THOMAS. Was trained and studied at Donore and was ordained by Bishop Plunkett in 1788 at Navan. By 1805 he was C.C. of Lusk, Co. Dublin, and in 1816 P.P. of Garristown. He built a new chapel for that parish in 1827 and died there in 1839. Before 1816 he had been made preacher general of Athy. In recording his death the provincial chapter of 1839 names him James and lists him as a son of Mullingar, but there is no reason to doubt the identification.

NANGLE, GERARD. A cleric of the convent of Trim who died in the Province of Naples in or before the year 1753. His name does not appear on the reception or profession books of San Clemente, Rome, the Irish Dominican convent there.

QUIRKE, DOMINIC. This priest was trained in Rome from 1757 and assigned to Naas from 1763. He returned to Meath by 1766 in which year he is known to have quested in the name and for the use of the convent of Mullingar. From 1776 to 1784 he worked at least occasionally in the area of New Ross and c. 1804 died at Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, where the Order had some claim to a priory.

O'REILLY, PHILIP. Fr. O'Reilly studied and was ordained at Louvain c. 1740 and by 1756 was stationed at Donore where he remained until 1767 at least. For the period 1777-89 he was P.P. of Rollestown in the Dublin diocese. There he died and was buried in the old church at Killoserry where a tomb-stone commemorates him.

ROCHFORD, JOHN. This priest from Trim was novice-master and procurator of SS. Sixtus and Clement, Rome, for the years 1725-50. There he died in 1753 at the age of 55 and was buried in the convent.

SHAW, LAURENCE. After his ordination at Louvain in 1777 Fr. Shaw, then considered a son of Mullingar, returned to Kilkenny where in 1780 he

roofed the shell of the Black Abbey in preparation for divine service. When the work was done permission to use the church was withheld for thirty-four years. In 1782 he was a curate at Durrow in the parish of Aghavoe. For the four years 1788-92 he was again a curate. This time in St. Canice's, Kilkenny, and on the death of Fr. Michael Fleming of Donore, he was placed in charge of the newly formed union of Ballivor and Kildalkey (May, 1793). This parish he ruled for 41 years. Leaving Donore, now on the southern rim of the parish, he built a small thatched chapel about fifty perches from Ballivor which he used until he built another in 1821. His second chapel, presumably an improvement on the first, had a bare clay floor. In 1797 he was illegally appointed vicar of Donore by a schismatical Dominican chapter. His tombstone at Ballivor terms him: "an exemplary and vigilant pastor, a mild yet zealous instructor . . . who entertained for his flock the affection of a parent." He lived about 82 years and died on 27th October, 1833, the last Dominican to live in the area.

WYNNE, MICHAEL. A priest from Sligo who moved to Donore c. 1740 and lived there until his death. He was granted the title of preacher general to the convent of Naas in 1749 and died on the 5th May, 1758, at the age of 60.

At first sight this list may appear dry and unrewarding, but only in the light of such detail, systematically collected, can the broader outlines of Irish Dominican history be seen; while without it generalisations are dangerous and unsure. Even the briefest glance at this present catalogue reveals that almost all the members of Donore in the 18th century studied at Louvain, a few at Rome, and none at Lisbon. Other lists for all the other convents might reveal the same percentage or show each of the four provinces to have had its own preference in the matter. The Donore lists reveals also that the priory drew only two helpers from Connacht, a fact which argues strong local support for the convent. It determines the exact number engaged in pastoral work; where their parishes lay; at what time this aspect of their labours was most intensive. And it shows, from the high number on whom the title of preacher general was conferred, that the friars of Donore, in taking parishes, had not forgotten that they were, by first vocation, friars preachers.

The ideal thing to do would be to give the exact reference for every item in the biographical dictionary above. In effect the reference would then be longer than the dictionary itself. As a compromise it may be well to indicate the principal sources from which it has been drawn. Dean Cogan's history of the diocese, with Fr. John Brady's supplements to that work, are the basis for information relative to parishes and places of burial. The two histories of the Irish Dominicans by O'Heyne (1706) and Burke (1762) give data on the community for the years in which those books were printed. The list compiled by Fr. Netterville in 1767, which lists every Dominican community in the country at that date, has never been published, and the original is now in Santa Sabina, Rome. Even more valuable as a source are the *Acta* of the provincial chapters, held every three years in Ireland. There is a full set for the 18th century in the Dominican archives, Tallaght, Co. Dublin, which has never been published. The amount of local detail in these documents is almost nil but they do record the names of those promoted as preachers general or masters in theology, and give a list of obits of those who died since the previous chapter (always within a three-year period). The exact date of death is never supplied. Other sources too have been used to a lesser degree, and if they have not been explicitly mentioned in the text, they explain themselves or are registered in Dominican archives in Dublin or Rome.

TWO BRONZE-AGE BURIALS

ETIENNE RYNNE

NEWCASTLE, CO. MEATH

IN APRIL, 1960, Mr. John Wood, Newcastle House, Oldcastle, Co. Meath, discovered a cist-burial on his lands. The plough-share had caught the capstone and had shifted it about 30 or 40 cm. northwards, with the result that the interior of the grave was partly-exposed. Mr. Wood reported the discovery to Sergeant J. Horgan of the Garda Síochána at Oldcastle, who informed the National Museum.

The grave was at the highest part of a large field about 1½ miles north-east of the town of Oldcastle, in the townland of Newcastle, parish of Oldcastle, and barony of Fore; Meath O.S. 6 inch sheet 9, 20.5 cm. from the north margin and 39 cm. from the west margin. At a slightly lower level and about 50 m. south-east of it is a cairn which appears to consist mainly, if not entirely, of recently collected field-stones. About 20 m. south of this cairn and lower down the slope of the hill is a standing-stone about 1.30 m. high. Neither the cairn nor the standing-stone is marked on either edition of the relevant O.S. 6 inch sheet. All three sites are above the 400 ft. contour.

The cist-grave was set into a roughly circular pit, averaging about 1.30 m. in diameter, which was dug into the boulder clay until the underlying "blue clay", as it is called locally, was reached. Dr. J. S. Jackson, Keeper, Natural History Division, National Museum, examined a sample of this "blue clay" and reports that it consisted of "abundant quartzose grains apparently derived from local basal carboniferous grit." The edge of the pit dug by the cist-builders to receive the cist was indefinite and was only distinguishable by the slightly harder nature of the surrounding clay; its north-western segment could not be definitely ascertained.

The cist was rectangular, orientated SW-NE, measuring 52 cm. by 30 cm. internally and about 38 cm. in depth. Three of the sides were each formed by a single flat slab placed on edge; the fourth side consisted of three slabs, two forming the side with a third partly backing them. The interior of the cist was paved with flat slabs which rested on the "blue clay."

For convenience the side-slabs are lettered A, B and C, starting with the north-western slab and moving in a clockwise direction; D denotes the three slabs of the south-western side (Fig. 1). The side-slabs were of varying lengths and heights above the floor of the cist: slab A was 88 cm. long and 35 cm. high; slab B was 30 cm. long and 20 cm. high; slab C was 82 cm. long and 30 cm. high; the three slabs of D spanned a distance of 26 cm. and averaged 30 cm. in height. All were sunk to different depths in the ground, the sockets being 18 cm., 2 cm., 8 cm., and 10 cm. deep respectively. All these slabs averaged about 5 cm. in thickness and were of the same material, identified by Dr. Jackson as being of "basal carboniferous, calcareous grit of local provenance."

To bring the tops of the side-slabs to a uniform height to support the capstone, flat stones were laid in layers on them. These extended on to the fill of the pit behind them. It would appear likely that the shallow socket for slab B was insufficient to retain the slab in a vertical position with the weight of the supporting stones and overlying capstone upon it. The result of this was that slab B inclined slightly inwards and the supporting stone slipped off, sinking slightly in the fill behind it.

The capstone was 1.20 m. in maximum length and 74 cm. in greatest width. It was flat on the underside and irregular on the upper surface, the