

Envoy Joaquina Lucas

Joaquina Lucas: Stalwart Legionary and Envoy Joaquina hailed from Manila, the capital of the Philippine Islands. She was a lecturer at Manila University. She joined the Legion of Mary in July 1940. She was one of the foundation members of the first praesidium set up in Hospicio de San Jose, Manila; an orphanage, hospital and home for the aged all combined, run by the Sisters of Charity.

In 1946 Joaquina decided to offer her services as envoy to the Concilium Legionis, giving up her position at the University. She travelled to Colombia, Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Peru. The small, slender girl displayed energy and efficiency which would have been amazing in a strong man.

In July 1953, Joaquina had recently been in Peru where she had started about one hundred praesidia. In Lima she had taken a plane and landed in Bogotá, Colombia, only a few hours before the arrival of the two envoys, Alfie Lambe and Seamus Grace. She was the first Legion envoy who had never been to Dublin. She had been looking forward to meeting the people from "Headquarters", she in turn was a great help to the two newcomers to Latin America because she had travelled for years in the continent, and was able to give them many valuable tips from her wide experience. In time when the two men became proficient in Portuguese and Spanish and with confidence and faith they set forth on their respective mission, Seamus would work in Venezuela, Colombia and the Central American Republics, Alfie's territory would be in the south of the continent; Argentina, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia.

Alfie found Spanish very difficult. On paper the words looked quite different from what they sounded. He was able to understand, for instance, the meaning of a newspaper article, but the spoken language was not as easy, particularly since the South Americans talked so fast, "It made you feel giddy to listen". It was not yet time to let him work on his own, so Alfie stayed with Joaquina. They travelled far and wide setting up the Legion. Thus grew one of those typical Legion friendships between persons who seemingly belonged to different worlds.

Alfie reported home that he considered his meeting with Joaquina to be the most fortunate thing that could have happened to him at the beginning of his envoyship. Her salient trait was a bubbling sense of humour. She reported to Ireland about their trips and adventures. On one occasion when they were assailed by a swarm of mosquitoes, she wrote to Concilium: "The poor boy bled so much that I held out to him the awful prospect that he would have no blood left for real martyrdom."

When Joaquina had completed her envoyship in South America, she came to Dublin and after some months at Legion Headquarters she was appointed Envoy to Portugal. She completed her assignment there in 1958 and returned home. In 1963 she was again appointed Envoy, this time in Japan, Indonesia and Korea where she remained until 1965. Joaquina was one of the longest serving Envoys. On her return home to Manila she took an active part in the Legion being especially involved in many of the Legionary activities.

On the feast of the Miraculous Medal, November, 27th, 1988, while walking to attend her Legion meeting, she was the victim of a "hit and run" traffic accident, and died soon afterwards in hospital. No doubt Our Blessed Mother had a great welcome for her stalwart Legionary and proficient Envoy.

(From "Alfie Lambe: Legion Envoy, and Maria Legionis, vol 32, No.1.19)

Highly Recommended:

A recording of a talk on Alfie's life and times given by the late Canon Francis Ripley is available on C.D. from Sean Reilly, Neilstown, Bohermeen, Navan, Co. Meath, Ireland. (2seanreilly@eircom.net) Cost 12 euro (including post and packaging)

Editor's Notes: If you have a story, an opinion, any item concerning Alfie that you would like to share with us; if your Praesidium has plans to have a special event or promotion to mark the 50th anniversary of his death, please share with us. You can contact us at above address. We'd be delighted to hear from you.



Alfie Lambe Newsletter

January 2009 Issue No. 2



The inaugural issue of our Newsletter was well received, and we thank you for your response and support. We will continue in our endeavours to spread the name of our saintly Brother throughout his homeland and beyond, but we do need your assistance. You can help us with distribution of the Newsletter and with being an Alfie Lambe promoter.

COMMEMORATION

A Mass of commemoration for the Servant of God, Alfie Lambe was concelebrated in the Church of The Assumption, Tullamore, his home town, on Sunday, 22nd June 2008. The chief celebrant was Rev. Lorenzo Bracken, M.H.M., assisted by Rev. James Crofton, Navan, Rev. Laurence English, M.H.M., Rev. Sean McGearty, Australia, Rev. Martin Halpin, Ballinabracky, Rev. Gerard Rice, Kilcloon and Rev. James Gavigan, Opus Dei, Lismullen.

There was an attendance of approx. 350, with sizeable contingents from Donegal, Limerick and Dublin. Also attending were members of Alfie Lambe's Family.

In his homily, Fr. Bracken, expressed his gratitude at being given the privilege to talk about Alfie. They had grown up together, he being two days younger and attended St. Brigid's National School in the town. He described Alfie as being of a gentle nature, the boisterousness of hurling and football was not for him. Fr. Bracken recounted the visit of a Christian Brother to the school, seeking entrants to the novitiate. Three volunteered, Alfie Lambe, Paudge Galvin, and Lorenzo Bracken. Fr. Flynn, P.P. gave Alfie and Paudge a reference, and advised the young Lorenzo to stay in school, saying, someday he would be ordained a priest.

Many years later, on Fr. Bracken's return to Ireland from the foreign missions, he found the former home of Alfie Lambe in a serious state

of disrepair. The local Urban District Council planned to have the derelict house demolished. With another former schoolmate, Mr. Timmy Smollen, he set about doing something to salvage the house. They talked to all the local Councillors and asked for a period of two or three weeks to put together a plan to save the dwelling. During this time they called to every business person in Tullamore to seek their support. "The response was extraordinary," said Fr. Bracken, "roofing, slates, windows, doors, nails, tools, anything we needed was given." It is estimated that the total value of the materials and voluntary labour was £30,000. The restoration of the house was completed in June 1992. Fr. Bracken paid tribute to the business people of Tullamore, indeed to all the people of the town and surrounding parishes, for their support in ensuring that the house was restored, and which he said, has become a shrine to Alfie Lambe.

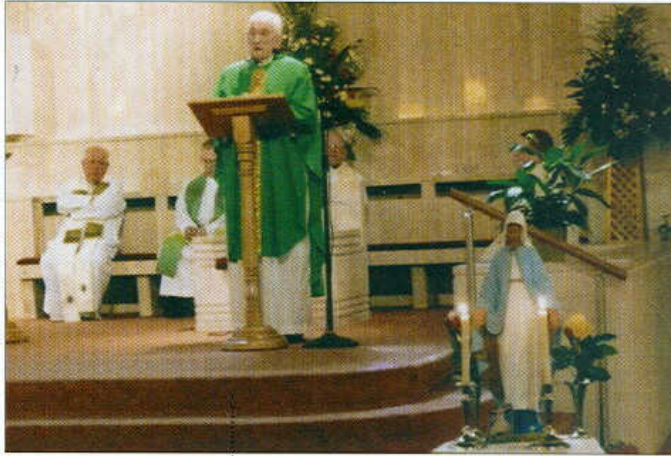
He also acknowledged the help provided by Dr. Michael Smith, Bishop of Meath, in arranging for the house to be insured.

Fr. Bracken recalled Alfie's term in the Christian Brother's Novitiate, where he spent four years, but had to leave due to health problems. He was devastated. He took a job in Salts (Ireland) Ltd., Worsted Spinners in Tullamore as a clerical worker and prompted by his brother, Jack, he joined the local praesidium of The Legion of Mary.

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He realised the possibility of giving himself entirely to Our Lady whom he loved so much and he threw himself into the Legion work with all his soul. His sadness lifted and his cheerfulness and strength were restored. On moving to Dublin, Alfie became more involved in the work of the Legion. In 1953 he was appointed with



Seamus Grace as an envoy to South America.

Alfie's personality was a great asset to him in this work. He became proficient in languages, e.g. Portuguese and Spanish, and he had started to learn Russian as it was his intention to go to Russia. He brought enthusiasm to his work. His strong faith and trust in Our Blessed Lord and Our Blessed Mother sustained him and guided him throughout his life.

Fr. Bracken in quoting Venerable Edel Quinn, "To suffer for love of the Lord is my greatest joy," said that Alfie had suffered also at the close of his life. During the previous year,

1958, Fr. Bracken recalled that he had just started on his mission work. In South America at present there is great devotion to Alfie Lambe and favours have been received through prayer. He encouraged the congregation to pray to Alfie He said, "Alfie Lambe has already given his life to God, we must help to have him beatified, this would be better even than winning the All-Ireland." (Gaelic Football Championship) In conclusion, Fr. Bracken said that Alfie loved his hometown and the people of Tullamore.

(Bernadette Hanley, Tullamore.)

An Alfie Lambe Prayer Group

Object of a group: To acknowledge God's goodness in giving the world the Servant of God Alphonsus (Alfie) Lambe. To pray for his beatification. To seek his intercession in our particular needs.

Considerations: A Praesidium member will be nominated leader and charged with the task of setting up the group. Identify a location, be it at someone's house or at a parish facility.

Set a recurring date and time. Have available a framed picture of Alfie Lambe. An Attendance book. Altar arrangement and Legion Handbook.

FORMAT: Prayer to the Holy Spirit. Short meditation. Rosary and short scripture readings between decades. Reading and discussion. A short extract from Alfie's life. Short scripture reading and meditation. Beatification prayer. Conclude with the Magnificat.
(Duration of meeting :: 60 minutes)

Important Date:

A Mass to mark the 50th Anniversary of the death of Servant of God, Alfie Lambe will be celebrated in the Church of the Assumption, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath on Sunday January 11th 2009 at 3pm. (Refreshments will be provided.)

ALFIE AND THE CONVERSION OF RUSSIA

Alfie Lambe never concentrated solely on his own field of work on the Continent of South America. His apostolic zeal embraced the whole world. He was particularly concerned with Russia, then in the grip of atheistic communism, and having read that Baptists from the United States had said their movement was flourishing in Russia, he believed steps should be taken to have the Legion introduced, to bring the faith to those hungering for God.

Alfie had already prepared himself for envoyship to Russia, having been told by the Legion in Dublin that there was no one who could speak Russian, he had learned to read, write and speak the language. In Buenos Aires there was a large Russian colony and having made contacts and friends among them he joined the Russian club where only Russian was spoken. He trained his Russian friends in the Legion system. In order to enter Russia he proposed to become an Argentinian citizen, and

would thus have the assistance of their embassy in Russia as there was a good relationship between the two countries. He would travel to Russia on a visa as a student of languages. Once there, he would get some sort of work. He would correspond with Concilium through letters to his Mother each month in coded language which would be re-transmitted to Concilium. He had also got a friend to translate the Legion Handbook into Russian.

A lengthy correspondence followed between Legion Headquarters in Dublin and Alfie in which the problems were highlighted and discussed. In a letter he stated, "If we keep waiting we will all pass into eternity and the work will be left for others to do." Alfie was the one who passed into eternity, but Legionaries working in the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe should embrace him as their patron for the evangelising work.

(From "Alfie Lambe: A Biography" by Hilde Firtel)

HANDS ON LEGIONARY

Climate changes from extremely cold to extremely hot are part of life in the countries of South America. Some might have been tempted to train people and allow them to undertake the work. Not so with Alfie He accompanied the Legionaries and showed them how to carry out the work. This is evidenced by work he undertook with a group of seminarians. During their holidays, Alfie offered to teach them the Legion of Mary system and how to undertake the work. A group of fourteen of them accompanied Alfie on a 24 hour train journey. He set up the miniature Legion altar he brought with him and they held their first Legion meeting in the carriage. He then assigned them in pairs to go through the carriages and speak to the passengers about the Mass and what devotion to Our Lady means to a Catholic. After two hours they reported back and discussed what they learned. During that journey four Legion meetings and work assignments took place.
(Excerpt from a recent talk by Bro. Noel Lynch)

Favours attributed to Alfie's intercession should be notified in writing to:

*Legion Of Mary, De Montfort House,
Morning Star Avenue,
Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, Ireland.*

Prayer for the Beatification of the Servant of God, Alphonsus Lambe

O God, who by your infinite mercy inflamed the heart of your servant, Alphonsus Lambe with an ardent love for you and for Mary, our Mother; a love which revealed itself in a life of intense labour, prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of souls, grant, if it be your will, that we may obtain, by his intercession, what we cannot obtain by our own merits.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.