



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
IRISH • CATHOLIC • AMERICAN

Ohio State Board

Newsletter

May 2024

Volume 6, Issue 5

President's Message



Brothers,

Hopefully temperatures are rising around the State and Summer is on the way. Reminder, we have a State Board meeting at Tara Hall in Columbus on May 18th. Presidents, if you cannot attend the meeting, please send someone from your division as a representative. We only have two State Board meetings per year. Your attendance and reports, help fuel ideas that we can use. If you have had a successful recruiting drive or fundraiser, that information needs to be shared with all the divisions in the State. A lot of divisions have been doing the same events over and over for years. If these events are fruitful, don't fix what isn't broke. If your division is looking for something new to try out, don't recreate the wheel. Come to the State Board meeting and learn and share what events are successful.

The National Convention is quickly approaching. If you plan on attending, please let State Secretary Pete Chrystal know. We need to send in our list of delegates to the National Secretary.

Congratulations to the 16 brothers that received their Major Degrees in Akron on April 18th. We are blessed to have a Major Degree Team in Ohio. If your Division would like to host a Major Degree Ceremony, please contact me or Degree Team leader Pat Visel (ddanaan@gmail.com.)

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Chaplain's Comments



Brothers, we recently heard the Gospel proclaimed where Jesus says He is the vine and we are the branches. Jesus is sharing several things with us that is extremely important to us as Catholic men.

He is speaking to us about our relationship to Him as He is the source of our life. As the vine feeds the branches the nourishment it needs to live and grow; the Word of God in the Gospel and the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus in the Eucharist feeds our hearts and our souls so we can live the Gospel in our lives and grow closer to Him.

Jesus also tells us that we play an integral part in bearing good fruit. As branches, we take what the vine has given us and use it to produce the grapes. Without the branches, the grapes would not exist. Jesus is telling us that as we receive the Word of God and the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, we are to take what we have been given, and go out into the world, the vineyard, as it were, and produce grapes. Without us, my brothers, the grapes would not exist. The grapes are the fruit of our labors, that is what we produce as Hibernians working together to spread the Gospel message in Unity, Friendship and Christian Charity.

Jesus said, *whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.* He is reminding us that the talents and gifts that He has given us are gifts from God to be used for the purpose of spreading the good news about God, his love for his people, and of His plan of salvation for the world.

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President's Message, cont.

Brothers, please follow up with the prospective member applications that are sent to you by State Organizer Joe Casey. These applications usually come in through our National website (aoh.com/join.) The National Organizer and Marketing team have worked hard to increase membership. These members need to be vetted just like any

other member but, they are coming to us and have expressed interest in their Irish heritage. It doesn't get any easier for recruitment.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

In Motto

Denny

Chaplain's Comments, cont.

This week's Gospel reminds us that as members of the living body of Christ on earth, we have a mission. We are charged, as the disciples of Christ to go forth and give glory to God by the way we live our lives. Jesus says, *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.* He is talking of the permanence of our actions that give praise and glory to God, helping others to know God and His love, and helping save the souls of those who have strayed from the path by bringing them back to God. He also reminds us how to do these things as he says, *This I command you: love one another.*

It is the love that we have received from the Father that has given us life, given us faith, given us hope, given us salvation, and has given us the opportunity to share these things with everyone we meet. We do this my brothers by living our faith in love as we work to bear much, good fruit. Our mission of Unity, Friendship and Christian Charity not only tells others we are Catholic men who are working together to do good things, but it tells the world that we are heralds of the Gospel and are working to bring about the Kingdom of God through the fruit of our labors. Bear much, good fruit, brothers!

God Bless,

Deacon Bruce

Division News

Irish Brigade Div. #1, Medina Co.

Dave Manley has been named the 2024 Hinckley Township Citizen of the Year! Congratulations, Dave!



St. Brendan's Div., Clermont Co.

We are putting on a golf outing on May 16th. to benefit The Caring Place which helps expectant mothers (saving lives!) and moms in need. See our web site for more information. website: <https://app.eventcaddy.com/events/saint-brendan-golf-classic> .

Mark Faust, mark@em1990.com

Secretary, Clermont County St. Brendan's Division

2023 - 2025 Officers

Chaplain	Deacon Bruce Dobbins brunomusarra@yahoo.com
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Secretary	Pete Chrystal pvchrystal59@gmail.com
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Director	Chris Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com
Past President	Bob Harper harper.bg@pg.com
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National Catholic Action	Patrick J. Lally lally8404@hotmail.com
National Project St. Patrick	Ron Hagan rhagan@hagancpa.com
National Deputy Organizer	Joseph M. Casey qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com
National Oversight Committee	Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com

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Cuyahoga Board	Ben Neylon BNeylon@yahoo.com
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Organizer	Joe Casey	qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com
Historian	Mike Finn	FCoolavin@aol.com
Veterans Affairs	Doug Gerrard	dpgerrard@aol.com

Newsletter News

Just a reminder. If you have information for our monthly newsletter, please send it as an attachment to an e-mail to Editor, Jim Casey at

jjcasey973@gmail.com

The **deadline** for articles is the **24th of the month.**

Ohio State Board

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To: All National, State, County, Elected Delegates and Brother Hibernians From: Pete Chrystal, AOH/OH Secretary

Re: Semi Annual State Board Meeting

Date: April 12, 2024

The Semi-Annual Ohio State Board Meeting mandated by Article III Section 3.1C AOH Ohio By-Laws will convene as follows: Date: Saturday May 18, 2024.

Time: Lunch at Noon, Meeting at 1:00 PM

Place: TaraHall 274 E Innis Columbus, OH 43207

The Agenda of the meeting will be as follows:

- Officer Reports
- Committee Reports
- Special Committee Reports
- Old Business
- New Business
- Good of the Order

Officers should email a copy of their report {either in the body of the email or as a Word or PDF attachment} to me at pvchrystal59@gmail.com by April 29, 2024.

Officer reports will be distributed via email prior to the meeting. Yours in Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity,

Pete Chrystal, OH State Secretary

Mark Your Calendars

2024 AOH National Convention

Orlando FL, August 7 - 11, 2024

For additional information, See <https://orlandoirish2024.com/home-1>

State Historian's Report

By: J. Michael Finn, State Historian



Irish writer Sean O'Casey said of Countess Constance de Markievicz, "One thing she had in abundance – physical courage; with that she was clothed as with a garment."

She was born Constance Georgina Gore-Booth, in London on February 4, 1868, one hundred and forty years ago this month. Her father was Henry Gore-Booth, a wealthy Anglo-Irish landowner and amateur explorer. At the Gore-Booth estate called Lissadel in County Sligo, Constance lived a life of luxury and wealth. Her father taught her how to handle firearms and shoot at an early age. She was also noted for being a competent and fearless horsewoman.

In 1893 she enrolled in art school in London. In 1898 she furthered her study of art at the Julian School in Paris. In Paris she met Count Casimir Dunin Markievicz. He was a Polish count and artist, whose family lived in Russia.

They were married in London in 1900. Their only child, Maeve, was born at Lissadel in 1901, where she remained to be raised by Constance's mother. Constance and Casimir settled in Dublin where their life revolved around Dublin's Anglo-Irish society. They both painted and acted in plays that Casimir wrote and produced for the Abbey Theater.

A life-changing event occurred in 1906 when Constance rented a cottage at Balally near Dublin. The poet, Padraic Colum, had once lived there. He left behind issues of Arthur Griffith's nationalist newspaper Sinn Fein. Reading these papers Constance became enlightened by the cause of Irish nationalism. In 1908 she joined Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Erin), a women's nationalist organization founded by Maud Gonne. Constance took part in nationalist demonstrations and wrote for their newspaper.

In 1909 Constance, along with Bulmer Hobson, founded Na Fianna Éireann, a republican boy scout movement. Constance taught the boys military drill, how to handle firearms and how to shoot. The Markievicz's home was always full of young scouts from the Dublin streets who Casimir dismissed as "little ragamuffins."

But, all was not well at home. Constance's commitment to Irish nationalism and her devotion to her Fianna boys absorbed all of her time and energies. Casimir, feeling neglected, returned to Russia in 1913. He only saw Constance on two other occasions: once in 1924 and again just before her death.

Attracted by the socialism of James Connolly, Constance became active in the Irish labor movement. She organized soup kitchens and fed the poor strikers and their children during the 1913 Dublin Transport Workers Strike, selling some of her jewelry to finance the operation. Following the strike, the Transport Workers union formed a self-protective organization, the Irish Citizen Army. At James Connolly's invitation, Constance joined the organization, advancing to the rank of major. Constance was now well known around Dublin either as "the Countess," or simply as "Madame."

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State Historian's Report, cont.

In April 1916 the Irish Citizen Army joined with the Irish Volunteers and began an armed rebellion in Dublin. During the Rising, the Countess was assigned to St. Stephen's Green. Michael Mallin, commander of the park, appointed her second-in-command. She suggested seizing the College of Surgeons, a building on the west side of the Green. The rebels occupied it and the Countess took command, setting up snipers on the roof, many of them had been her Fianna scouts.

When Patrick Pearse surrendered, the College of Surgeons was also forced to surrender. The Countess was arrested and marched down Grafton Street with her command to Dublin Castle. She was offered an opportunity to ride by an English officer, but she told him, "No offense, but I prefer to tag along with my own." From the Castle she was transported to Kilmainham Jail and placed in solitary confinement.

The Countess was taken to Richmond Barracks for court martial. The president of the court asked her how she pleaded to the charge of causing disaffection among the population. She replied, "Guilty! Two-hundred percent, and proud of it!" She was found guilty and sentenced to death. The president asked her if she had anything to say and she replied, "Yes, old feller, I went out to fight for Ireland's freedom and it doesn't matter a tinker's cuss what happens to me. I did what I thought was right and I stand by it."

Just prior to her scheduled execution, the British suddenly commuted her sentence to life imprisonment. This was likely due to her sex and her foreign title. When the Countess was told of the change she was not pleased. She told the British soldier who delivered the message, "I do wish your lot had the decency to shoot me."

The Countess was sent to Aylsbury Prison in England. While in prison she was elected president of Cumann na mBan, the women's republican organization of the Irish Volunteers. She served one year in prison and was released in 1917 as part of the general amnesty. Upon her release, she ran for public office under the Sinn Fein party. She was jailed again in 1918. While in prison she was elected to the British House of Commons seat representing Dublin. She was the first woman to be elected to the British Parliament. When she was released, she and the other Sinn Fein candidates refused their seats. They formed their own Irish parliament, the first Dáil Éireann. She was appointed the Irish Republic's first Minister for Labor.

The Countess took the republican side during the Irish Civil War and was imprisoned several times by the Irish Free State. From April to June 1922 she toured America speaking on behalf of the republican cause under the auspices of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (AARIR). She traveled with Kathleen Barry, sister of the executed rebel, Kevin Barry. Billed as "Ireland's Joan of Arc," the tour took her from coast to coast, and included Ohio. She made speaking stops in Akron, Cleveland and Cincinnati. After her visit to Akron, where she spoke at Marian Hall, she wrote to her sister, "Akron particularly took my fancy."

She was a tireless worker for the poor. During the Coal Strike of 1926 she drove around Dublin in her old Ford motorcar delivering bags of turf to the poor. She often carried the heavy bags up several flights in the dark Dublin tenements. She joined de Valera's Fianna Fail Party in 1926, serving as chairperson at its first meeting. She was again elected to the Dáil in 1927.

Countess de Markievicz died on July 15, 1927 in the public ward of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital in Dublin from complications of appendicitis. Thousands marched in her funeral procession through Dublin that was followed by eight trucks loaded with flowers. Eamon de Valera served as one of her pallbearers. She is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery.

State Organizer's Report

My thanks to those divisions who got back with me concerning the open application spreadsheet we received from our National Organizer, Ryan Curry. At this writing, we have only one open application that we cannot do anything with it until we receive a copy from the Organizer. As I have mentioned in the past, when you do receive an application directly from the National Organizer or from me, be sure to let me know when contact has been made and whether or not the applicant has joined your division.

We are going to try again to enlarge the Ohio Hibernian count by searching areas in the state where we might be able to form new divisions. We currently have 14 divisions in 12 counties. There are 88 counties in Ohio and many of them are in rural areas, but we should be able to get a few more that might be surrounding or near our current divisions. Interest has been shown in the past in Jefferson and Scioto counties; maybe we can start in those areas. If anyone has friends or relatives in any of the open counties that may be interested in joining and or helping us form new divisions, please let our Worthy President or me know. We could even start out by having them join as At-Large members and go from there.

Thank you and have a great springtime!

Joe Casey, Deputy National Organizer, State of Ohio Organizer

Veterans Affairs Report

1. From article News Release dated February 26,2024 on <https://news.va.gov>

Today, VA announced that all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military — at home or abroad — will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. This means that all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll.

2. Service Academy enrollment procedures can be found at the following websites:

ARMY, <https://www.westpoint.edu/admissions/steps-to-admission>

NAVY / USMC, <https://www.usna.edu/Admissions/Apply/index.php>

USAF, <https://www.academyadmissions.com/>

USCG, <https://uscga.edu/admissions/apply/>

-It is best to start enrollment process, (and to contact Senator or Representative) as soon as possible.

3. Members of Congress contact information, for admissions , if needed :

<https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

4. Visit www.ohiovets.gov or AOH National website www.aoh.com/veterans-affairs for a litany of organizations and websites that assist Veterans.

Doug Gerrard, Veterans Affairs Chair, 513-615-7469, dpgerrard@aol.com

2024 AOH/LAOH National Convention August 7 - 11, 2024

You are invited to Orlando, Florida



For online ROOM RESERVATION (\$125 + taxes) and EVENTS REGISTRATION please go to <https://orlandoirish2024.com>
Events Registration through the Mail:
This Form is for Convention events only. Please print neatly.
(Does not include Hotel Registration.)



Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Email _____ Phone _____

I am a member of the AOH / LAOH (circle either AOH or LAOH)

Membership # _____ Division # _____ County _____ State _____

Guest Registration: Name _____ Email _____

Full Events Package: \$215 if reserved by June 15, 2024.

Full Events Reservation made after June 15, 2024 and thereafter: \$235. Options:

- () Full Package encompasses all of the following choices below. Includes \$25 Registration Fee.
- () Icebreaker (Wednesday, August 7th) \$60: Casual Attire, Buffet, complimentary draft beer and signature drink. Served 7pm - 9pm. Includes \$25 Registration Fee.
- () Irish Night (Friday, August 9th) \$85: Business Casual Attire, Choice of one entrée - A combo of Chicken & Sliced Pork Loin / Vegetarian. Served 6pm - 10pm. Includes \$25 Registration Fee.
- () Final Banquet (Saturday, August 10th) \$90: Formal Black Tie Optional, Choice of one entrée - Pan Seared Salmon / Sliced Sirloin of Beef / Vegan. Served 6pm - 10pm. Includes \$25 Registration Fee.
- () Registration Only: \$25
* Please consider making all reservations and payment online to streamline the process.
- ** If registering through the mail, please remit this form and payment to:
AOH National Secretary, PO Box 1742, Jensen Beach FL 34958-1742.
** If paying event registration by check, make payment payable to: "The AOH/LAOH National Convention"

Catholic Action

The month of May is traditionally a month dedicated to Mary. Is your diocese or parish offering any special opportunities to honor the Mother of God? The Easter season will come to an end in May this year. The Ascension of the Lord, a solemnity and holy day of obligation, falls this year on May 9, but many dioceses of the United States transfer the Ascension to the following Sunday. The last Sunday of the month (26th) is Holy Trinity Sunday.

MAJOR SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS OF MAY

Joseph the Worker	May 1	
Athanasius	May 2	Memorial
Philip and James, Apostles	May 3	Feast
The Ascension of the Lord	May 9	Solemnity
Damien de Veuster (The Leper)	May 10	
Our Lady of Fatima	May 13	
Matthias, Apostle	May 14	Feast
The Visitation of Mary	May 31	Feast

IRISH SAINTS OF MAY

Ultan, Abbot (d. 686)

May 2

St. Ultan, along with his sainted brothers, Furse and Foillan, crossed over to East Anglia together. The East Anglian king, Sigeber I, gave them land at Burgh Castle, near Yarmouth, upon which they founded an abbey. The land was harried by raids from the pagan Mercians, and Furse decided to leave for the Continent, where he died. Years later, Ultan and Foillan stopped at their brother's tomb at Peronne, on the way back from a Roman pilgrimage. They were encouraged to remain in Gaul by Blessed Ita and her daughter, St. Gertrude, who offered them land for a foundation at Fosses. Ultan became the abbot of Fosses, but was later abbot at Peronne, where he died. The saint received a revelation of the death of his brother Furse at the hands of bandits, and he predicted the death of St. Gertrude.

Gibrian (d.c. 515)

May 8

Late in the fifth century, an Irish family group consisting of seven brothers and three sisters emigrated to Brittany, looking for an opportunity to serve God there. Gibrian was a priest and the eldest, their leader. They adopted an heremetical life near the Marne, close enough to each other to remain in contact. St. Gibrian died there after a life of prayer and austerity, and a chapel was erected at the site of his hermitage. His relics were removed to Rheims to save them from the Vikings, but they did not survive the destruction wrought by the French Revolution.

Conleth, Bishop of Kildare (d.c. 520)

May 10

Conleth is also known as Conlaed, and is one of a number of early Irish saints who were said to be skilled workers in metal. He was living as a hermit at Old Connell on the Liffey when he made the acquaintance of St. Brigid. Brigid gave him an avenue for his artistic talents, and later his pastoral skills as well, after he was chosen bishop of Kildare. Conleth is considered by some the fashioner of a crozier presented to St. Finbar, which is preserved to this day. There is an odd story about his being devoured by wolves, but scholars consider it a legendary attempt to explain his name in Gaelic.

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Catholic Action, cont.

Comgall, Abbot of Bangor (c. 517-603)

May 11

St. Comgall, born in Ulster, is considered one of the founders of Irish monasticism. After some years of tutelage under St. Fintan in the monastery of Cloneenagh and his ordination as a priest, Comgall retired to an island in Lough Erne with a few followers. The life of this community was so severe that Bishop Lugid, who had ordained Comgall, prevailed upon him to relax the rule in force there. Later, Comgall founded the great abbey of Bangor, which came to have about 3 thousand monks there and at daughter houses during Comgall's reign. Many sought his spiritual mentorship, including St. Columban, who later carried many Bangor traditions to the Continent. The saint ventured overseas at least once on a missionary journey to the Picts of Scotland in the company of St. Colmcille. A metrical version of a monastic rule attributed to Comgall still exists.

Carthach, Bishop and Abbot (d. 637)

May 14

St. Carthach seems to have adopted his name from his mentor, St. Carthach the Elder, to whom he was known as "Mochuda," or "my Cuda," the last evidently being his given name. He is also known as Carthage. He was a swineherd of Castlemaine, Kerry, till coming under the tutelage of his mentor, who trained him as a monk and ordained him. Carthach lived for a time as a hermit at a place named Kiltulagh, but local ecclesiastical rivalries led him to remove to Bangor where he was directed by St. Comgall. After visiting a number of other monasteries, Carthach eventually settled at Rahan in present County Offaly, c. 595, establishing an abbey which is said to have eventually grown to 800 monks. Carthach's rule for that house is extant, though not likely in its original form. The saint may also have held the bishopric of Fircall. The life at Rahan was very austere, a fact perhaps supplying the motive of two unhappy inmates who attempted to drown Carthach. In 635, the community was broken up when the monks were expelled by Blathmac, a hostile chieftain. After some wandering, Carthach and his followers settled on the banks of the Blackwater, where, on land donated by a local prince, they established the great abbey and school of Lismore. Here again, Carthach is said to have served as abbot-bishop, and is regarded as the founder of the see of Lismore. The saint at some point withdrew from the business of construction of the abbey to a cave in a nearby glen--Mochuda's Inch--where he died in 637.

Brendan, Abbot of Clonfert (d. 577 or 583)

May 16

Despite the fact that St. Brendan is one of the best known of Ireland's saints, the true story of his life is so embellished with legend that it is hard to arrive at very many undisputed details. He was probably born near Tralee. Brendan was under the tutelage of several different spiritual mentors in his youth. He was probably ordained a priest before he became a monk. There is little undisputed evidence to support the story of his far-flung adventures at sea and across the North Atlantic; he probably did voyage to Scotland, and possibly Wales. The most reliable fact about him is that he established the abbey at Clonfert, about 559. Brendan supposedly established a rule for Clonfert, which was dictated to him by an angel. Brendan reputedly died at Enach Duin, where he had gone to visit his sister, Brig, who led a religious community of women there. One thing that is unquestionable about Brendan is that he made an enormous spiritual impression upon his contemporaries.

Madelgisilus (d.c. 655)

May 30

This saint, also known as Mauguille, was a companion of St. Fursey, and accompanied him first to Britain, then to Gaul. Following the death of his friend, Madelgisilus joined the monastic community of Saint-Riquier, later withdrawing to a hermit's life. He had fallen seriously ill when he was discovered in this state by an English recluse named Vulgan, who nursed him back to health. The two became great friends and lived a solitary life not far from each other, dying around the same time.

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Catholic Action, cont.

ISSUES

For a long time it has been true that the secular press is not a good source of information about what is happening in the Church or about public issues that bear upon Church teachings. It has always been the case that there are media figures hostile to the faith, as well as those who are simply ignorant or who lack any understanding of issues from a Catholic point of view. Both of these factors are greatly exacerbated in our time. And there are now forces in the media which exhibit a militant hostility toward the Church, or Christians in general. For these reasons, it is all the more crucial that Catholics are plugged into the Catholic press for news and opinions on Catholic issues. Some good sources are EWTN's radio and television affiliates and website (www.ewtn.com/news), the Relevant Radio network, and the Catholic News Agency (www.catholicnewsagency.com). Catholics of my vintage who still like to read something called a newspaper may find the *National Catholic Register* useful.

Do you have local news? Please send for inclusion in this report

Fraternally,

Pat Lally, 330-791-7135, lally8404@hotmail.com

Major Degrees of the Order

The month of April saw the Sons of Milesius Degree Team bring 26 brothers into the full fold of Hibernianism. On April 4th, 10 brothers received the Major Degrees at Patrick Pearse Division's Tara Hall in Columbus, Ohio.

The team then traveled to Akron, Ohio and, on April 20th another 16 brothers received the Major Degrees at Mark Heffernan Division's Hibernian Hall. The sixteen Brothers who made their Major Degrees on Saturday April 20th. in Akron are pictured below. Timothy Halle, Robert Brown, Frank Sandor, Patrick Costello, Timothy Hodgkiss, Joe Herron, Pat Armor, Brian O'Donnell, Michael Tierney, James Mayer, Gerard Mattimore, Brien Dewitt, Dillon Shammo, Christopher Milkier, Patrick Taylor Jr., Thomas Deegan.



When entering the Order through the Shamrock Degree, all candidates pledge to "receive the Lessons and take the Test of the Order known as the Major Degrees of the Order in accordance with our laws." Check your roster, and encourage all members who have not done so to take the Major Degrees at their earliest opportunity..

In Motto,

Dennis Parks, AOH OH State President, (330) 414-1963, dparks121@yahoo.com, www.ohioaoh.com

Project St. Patrick Supporting Vocations

As we get ready for our Easter Appeal and starting our process of Project St Patrick fund raising, we want to give you a timeline of our projected process for this year 2024. The following is our anticipated schedule:

Between January and October, we encourage all Divisions, Counties, and State Boards (and Individuals if so inclined) to make an Easter Appeal contribution using the “*2024 Project St. Patrick Donation Form*”. The form is on our website (aoh.com) either on:

The *HOME* page under *CATHOLIC* then scroll down to *PROJECT ST PATRICK* then scroll down again to *2024 PROJECT ST PATRICK DONATION FORM*. Please note that the form should be filled in on the website then printed once complete.

OR

The *FORMS* page under *OFFICIAL AOH FORMS* then scroll down to *Project St Patrick Forms* and scroll down again to *2024 PROJECT ST PARICK DONATION FORM*. Please note that the form should be filled in on the website then printed once complete.

Between June and August, we ask all Divisions to send us the *2024 DIVISION DIOCESE FORM* for the Diocese within their Division area that has a Vocational Director. This form is our lead to send letters to the Vocational Director to notify students who are studying for religious life or a seminarian of the grant opportunity. The letter to the Vocational Directors will be sent around the 1st of September.

We place a cutoff date of October 15th on the *2024 VOCATIONAL GRANT APPLICATION FORM* as the last day the candidate can turn in the application to the Vocational Director. Then we inform Vocational Directors that they must submit the *2024 VOCATIONAL GRANT APPLICTION FORM* along with their endorsement of the candidate by October 31st.

Between November 1st and November 15th, the Chair people along with the National AOH and National LAOH Presidents finalize the approval of candidates who will receive the grants and hopefully by the 1st of December the checks “are in the mail”.

God Bless,

Ron Hagan

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Project St. Patrick Chairman

Freedom For All Ireland

As most of you know, AOH's FFAI biannual delegates trip took place in mid-February. The purpose of this trip is to distribute the Christmas Appeal grants and show our support of the cause. The following is a summary of the events that took place over the ten-day excursion.

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 – Arrival

The tour kicked off with a two-hour ride from Dublin to Saint Patrick Centre Downpatrick located in County Down, Northern Ireland. Situated by Saint Patrick's grave, Saint Patrick Centre is the only permanent exhibit in the world devoted to Ireland's patron saint. The multimedia exhibition guides visitors through the history of Ireland as told in the words of the saint himself.

You may recognize the Centre as a long-time recipient of the FFAI Christmas appeal grant or the administrator of the Young Ambassador Program, which creates a network of informed and influential individuals throughout America, armed with specialist knowledge and links to the northern part of Ireland. Founded over 16 years ago, the program hosts people from all over America, matching them with work placements and offering experiences which will enhance their future careers. In an effort to grow our organization and cultivate future leaders, AOH is proud to partner with the Saint Patrick Centre and the Young Ambassador Program; fostering a knowledge and love of Ireland that will endure in future generations. For more information about Saint Patrick Centre, visit [the official website](#). To read more about the Young Ambassador Program and AOH's involvement, visit [AOH Young Ambassadors](#).

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 – Ash Wednesday

While plans for ash distribution by Father Gary Donegan regrettably fell through, the group carried on to the Aidan McAnespie Memorial on the outskirts of Aughnacloy. McAnespie was an Irish Catholic man who was shot in the back by a British soldier after passing through the Aughnacloy, County Tyrone border checkpoint in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. In a rare carriage of justice, former British soldier David Holden was found guilty of manslaughter in November of 2022. Sadly, barring repeal, Holden would be among the last to be held accountable after the passage of the UK Legacy bill in 2023. Learn more about [McAnespie's story here](#). From there, we traveled to Clones in County Monaghan to meet with Troubles' historian, Brian MacDonald and photojournalist, Oistin McBride. The men shared their unique experiences living in the border area throughout the Troubles. McBride's book, "Family, Friends, and Neighbors: An Irish Photobiography" intimately documents life during that time.

Thursday, February 15, 2024

En route to Tyrone, we stopped in Carrickmore where we visited the Tyrone Garden of Remembrance which commemorates Tyrone Republicans killed in the conflict. There we met with members of EALU and Tyrone National Graves; both of which receive support from the FFAI Christmas Appeal. We then continued to Omagh to meet with the Omagh Choir and the Omagh basketball team, cross community groups born out of the 1998 Omagh bombing. We also visited the Omagh Memorial Garden, a memorial of the 29 lives lost in said bombing.

Two guest authors were slotted for Thursday evening. The first of which, Ricky O'Rawe, discussed his books, "Northern Heist" and "Stake Knife's Dirty War: The Inside Story of Scappaticci, the IRA's Nutting Squad and the British Spooks Who Ran the War." O'Rawe is currently in talks with Netflix regarding bringing his works to screen. The second author, John Crawley, authored "The Yank," which offers a true and captivating account of his life as a special operations U.S. Marine- turned IRA volunteer and gunrunner. In an interesting turn of events, Crawley declined to discuss his book, instead sharing his controversial take on the Good Friday Agreement, claiming the landmark treaty "sold out to the crown." Needless to say, he received mixed feedback.

Friday, February 16, 2024

To conclude the first leg of our trip, we spent Friday in Derry. There we met with activists and the world- renowned Bogside Artists at the McBrearty Garden of Tribute memorial. We then visited the [Museum of of Free Derry](#), the main signature project of the Bloody Sunday Trust. The museum depicts firsthand accounts from the Free Derry community

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and is situated in the center of where the events (including the Battle of the Bogside, Internment, Bloody Sunday, and Operation Motorman) unfolded – aka the “Bloody Sunday killing zone.” The Bloody Sunday Trust is a longtime recipient of the Christmas Appeal grant. SDLP representative Colum Eastwood and the Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation addressed our group.



Saturday, February 17, 2024 – Free Day

Sunday, February 18, 2024

The group departed Derry for the Houben Center at Holy Cross in Ardoyne, Belfast of which AOH was a contributing donor. There, we passed out the FFAI Christmas Appeal grants. [Watch the presentation here.](#)

Monday, February 19, 2024

On Monday, our first stop was the Connolly House in West Belfast where we heard from FFAI Chair Martin Galvin. The significance of the house is as follows: “In 1984, when Sinn Fein members such as Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were banned from the United States, a delegation of 130 Americans, including AOH representatives, traveled to the six counties on a fact-finding visit to see for themselves. The Thatcher government tried to block the American visit by issuing an Exclusion Order to its leader, current FFAI Chair Martin Galvin. The delegation joined in a huge Internment Day Rally that ended at Connolly House. When Martin Galvin was called to the platform by Gerry Adams rally was brutally attacked from all sides by the Royal Ulster Constabulary firing plastic bullets and driving land rovers into the crowd. One man Sean Downes was murdered and scores including some Americans were wounded, in the incident called "Belfast's Bloody Sunday", which brought the reality of British repression to network American television news and a Congressional hearing.” After visiting the Connolly House, we toured the James Connolly Centre where we heard from the human rights advocacy group, Relatives for Justice, and Ireland’s Future, a group advocating for a united Ireland.

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

During a visit to Belfast City Hall, we met with former Belfast City Mayor Tom Hartley and former Belfast City Councilor Fra McCann, both of whom belong to Northern Ireland’s most prominent political party, Sinn Fein. They shared with us their experiences serving their constituencies as Irish Catholic Republicans in the late 1980s.

Later, we toured the Roddy McCorley Republican Heritage Museum which displays a myriad of artifacts and memorabilia. The collection charts the Republican struggle for independence dating back to the 1798 Rebellion, through the revolutionary period before and after 1916, right up to the Peace Process of the 1990s.

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

On our final day, we were granted the opportunity to tour the Leinster House in Dublin. Since 1922, Leinster House in Dublin has served as the parliament building of the Republic of Ireland. While there, we were able to sit in on a meeting of the Senate.

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