

Priests who died in the Great Famine

By Daniel Grace

Introduction

The following obituaries of Catholic priests who died of fever during the Great Famine were extracted from the files of the *Tipperary Vindicator* newspaper. The *Vindicator* was published by Maurice Lenehan between 1844 and 1849. It was Catholic and nationalist in tone and had been established as a rival to the conservative *Nenagh Guardian*. Maurice Lenehan was a staunch defender of the Catholic priesthood, and this probably explained his desire to bring to public notice the names of those priests who had in a sense laid down their lives for their flocks.

The *Vindicator* recorded a total of 35 priests who died of various types of fever during the years 1846 to 1849. No priest is recorded as having died of a famine-related disease in 1846, but a total of 24 fell victim the following year. Five priests died from fever in 1848 and six in 1849. Deaths during the latter year were mainly from cholera.

Six of the 35 who died were parish priests; 24 were curates; two belonged to religious orders; three are of uncertain status. Rev. Patrick O'Reilly of Cavan and Rev. Mr. Joyce of Carlow probably were curates, although the newspaper does not specify this. Rev. Martin Hermesen, "a reduced French priest", was probably not active in the ministry.

1847

TV 9 January. At Effen [Effin], Co. Limerick, of fever, the Rev. John Clifford, curate to the Rev. D. Nagle PP.

TV 9 January. At Knockane, of fever, the Rev. Darby Falvey PP, of Glenflesk near Killarney.

TV 17 April. On Sunday the 11th, of fever, in the thirty-second year of his age and fourth of his mission, the Rev. James Cormack RCC of Mullanahone [Mullinahone]. (Note: A poem entitled *To the memory of Rev. James Cormack CC, late of Mullanahone* appeared in TV 24 April 1847).

TV 17 April. Of fever caught in the discharge of his duties, the Rev. Mr. Hanrahan RCC of Ennistymon.

TV 17 April. At Castlebar, of malignant fever caught in the discharge of his functions, the Rev. James MacManus PP of Turlough.

TV 21 April. At Oran, Co. Roscommon, the Rev. P. Hanly PP, of fever caught in administering the sacred rites of religion to the dying poor of his extensive parish.

TV 21 April. In Cavan on the 12th inst., at the early age of 31 years, the Rev. Patrick O'Reilly DD, of fever caught in the discharge of his duties in Cavan Workhouse.

TV 24 April. April 20th, in the thirty-second year of his age and fifth of his ministry, the Rev. Michael Denny RCC of Dunmanway. Cut down in the prime and vigour of life by fever caught in the discharge of his arduous missionary duties.

TV 15 May. Of malignant fever, at Glauntane, Co. Cork, the Rev. M. Moriarty, RC of that parish.

TV 24 May. On Wednesday, of fever, the Rev. Thomas Enright RCC of Tralee.

TV 12 June. At Liscarroll, Co. Cork, of fever, the Rev. Wm. Goulden, RC curate.

TV 23 June. Yesterday (Tuesday) morning, at nine o'clock at his lodgings in Birr, the Rev.

19th	Pd J. B. this day amt. of sale			£75	5	11
				£22	7	6
				£97	13	5½
Feby 24th	Total amt. recd. for meal sold previous to this date					
26th	Sum handed J. B. amt. of this day's sale			£23	8	4
March 5th	Do.	do.	do.	£23	2	7½
---- 12th	Do.	do.	do.	£23	0	7½
---- 19th	Do.	do.	do.	£21	1	½

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to the editor of this Journal for drawing his attention to the Notebooks, and to Mr. Sean O'Driscoll, MA, of 24 Lime Trees Road East, Douglas, Cork, who in turn alerted the editor to their existence and location. For assistance with footnotes the author is indebted to Dr. Denis G. Marnane, Tipperary town. He is also indebted to Mr. Paddy Leamy of Marlhill, New Inn, who was consulted regarding the identification of surnames and placenames in the Notebooks, and who advised that descendants of a substantial number of the families named in the Notebook still reside in Co. Tipperary, but in most cases in townlands other than those mentioned in the Notebooks.

FOOTNOTES

1. For. Capt. Ogle, a Famine relief officer, see Parliamentary Papers 1847, Vol. 50.
2. Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Keating (1777-1847), owner of Lagganstown Upper and Lower.
3. Robbins was a local landowner with 1,500 acres in three townlands.
4. The Masseys lived at what is now known as O'Malleys of Suirville.
5. See n4.

Joseph Burke OSA, of malignant typhus fever caught in zealously ministering to the necessities of the poor in Birr Union Workhouse, of which he has had been assistant chaplain for the last few months.

TV 26 June. 23 June, at his lodgings, Sullivan's Quay, Cork, of fever, the Rev. P. Duggan OSFC.

TV 26 June. At Mitchelstown, of fever, the Rev. Daniel Riordan RCC.

TV 26 June. Of fever, the Rev. Dominic O'Connor RCC of Collooney.

TV 26 June. Of fever, the Rev. James Hughes RCC, Ballymacnab.

TV 26 July. Of fever, the Rev. J. Geoghean PP of Craughwell, Co. Galway.

TV 14 August. On Sunday last, of typhus fever, the Rev. Patrick O'Gorman PP of Clareabbey and Killone.

TV 14 August. At Loughrea, of fever, the Rev. John Moloney RC, administrator of that town.

TV 14 August. Of fever, the Rev. John Smith RCC of Cootehill, Co. Cavan.

TV 18 September. Of dysentery, at Clonmoyle, parish of Ahavollogue, Co. Cork, the Rev. Denis O'Donovan CC, in his forty-fourth year.

TV 20 October. At Westport, Co. Galway [?], the Rev. James Ferrock RCC, of fever caught in the discharge of his missionary labours.

TV 3 November. At Baltinglass, diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, of fever caught in the discharge of his sacred duties, the Rev. John O'Brien RCC, in the eight month of his ministry and twenty-third year of his age.

TV 17 November. In Cavan, of fever caught in ministering to the sick poor, the Rev. Eugene McQuaid RCC.

1848

TV 2 February. Jan. 25th, after a severe illness contracted in the discharge of his onerous duties, the Rev. Mr. Egan RCC, Limerick.

TV 15 March. At Ferriter near Dingle, of fever, the Rev. John Gailivan RCC.

TV 19 April. Of fever, the Rev. Denis O'Kearney PP of Aghina.

TV 31 May. May 22nd, in Carlow, of malignant fever, the Rev. Mr. Joyce, Catholic Chaplain to the Fever Hospital.

TV 20 September. Death of Rev. John Doolan CC Roscrea, of fever caught in discharge of his clerical duties. Died Sunday 17th September.

1849

TV 17 January. At Barrington's Hospital, Limerick, of fever, the Rev. Martin Hermsen, a reduced French priest.

TV 7 March. Of fever, the Rev. William Croke, RC curate of Charleville, nephew of Rev. Thomas Croke PP.

TV 28 April. Of cholera, the Rev. Charles O'Donoghue RCC of Effin [Efffin], Co. Limerick, after celebrating Mass in the house of a farmer who had died of the malady.

TV 23 May. Of fever, caught in the discharge of his sacred calling, the Rev. George Chapman CC of New Ross.

TV 23 May. At Athenry, Co. Galway, of cholera, the Rev. Mr. Healy CC.

TV 7 July. In Thurles on Friday (yesterday) morning, the Rev. Mr. Meagher, CC for many years in Templemore and for the last three years of his life in Thurles. The disease of which the Rev. Gentleman fell victim was malignant fever, caught in the discharge of his missionary labours among the destitute poor of the parish.