

LUX EDMUNDI: MAY, 2014

Amongst the Franciscans and Poor Clares in Ireland, 2014 is the Year of the Holy Name of Jesus. They are celebrating the memory of Fr. Francis Donnelly, OFM, who, in 1914, did so much to renew devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, and whose work is manifested physically in the small tiles, inscribed with the letters IHS – a monogram for the name Jesus --- still found over the entrances to houses across the country.

Devotion to the Holy Name was practised by Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice and by his Brothers in both the aboriginal and undivided Society of the Presentation and in the Society of Religious Brothers (i.e. the Christian Brothers), recitation of the Litany of the Holy Name being prescribed as part of Morning Prayer in the respective Constitutions of these institutes.

Veneration of the Holy Name of Jesus goes right back to the Apostles who deemed it the only name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (*Acts* 4:12). They baptised in the Name of Jesus (*ibid.* 2:38, 8:16); performed miracles and exorcisms by it (*ibid.* 4:30). St. Paul insists that Jesus is the name above all names, one at which every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth (*Phil* 2:10).

In the cultivation of reverence for the Holy Name of Jesus there is also a certain adumbration of the Second Commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain”. When the Holy Name is used as an expletive, when it is blurted out as a swear-word, it is, undoubtedly, being used in vain and there may be something of reparation for such disrespect in this devotion.

Of course, the Name of God is taken in vain especially in the act of perjury, a crime in law, human and divine, one, perhaps, not always as abhorred amongst us as it should be. Telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, under oath, is absolutely crucial to the dispensation of justice. More generally, being men and women of our word is important in all human relations. Blessed Edmund was a man whose word was his bond; who conducted his affairs in an honourable manner; and who attended to truth and justice and the rights and needs of the poor.

In this he is our mentor and should be our exemplar. Each Catholic school is part of both Church and State. The great majority of such schools in the Republic of Ireland are funded by the State and receive monies from the government through the Minister for Education and Skills for a variety of purposes. Each Board of Management is responsible for the overall management of these funds and it should be its constant objective to hold and use this income in complete accordance with the relevant legislation and regulation. In fact, any school under Catholic patronage and/or trusteeship should be a little part of Ireland where integrity and honesty matter, where nothing is done that would not bear scrutiny and where all is done with reference to the common good.

Each such school is an *ecclesia scholastica*, the Church of the School, at the service of the family, the *ecclesia domestica*, the Church of the Home. Between them, Home and School should advocate and inculcate the third characteristic of the Fianna, *Beart de réir ár mbriathar*, Deeds according to our words. It may be that, when the Celtic Tiger roared, cuteness trumped wisdom, chicanery, trust, and gain justified almost any means. May Catholic schools, especially those in the tradition of Blessed Edmund, be models of fairness, openness, transparency and accountability in every respect.