

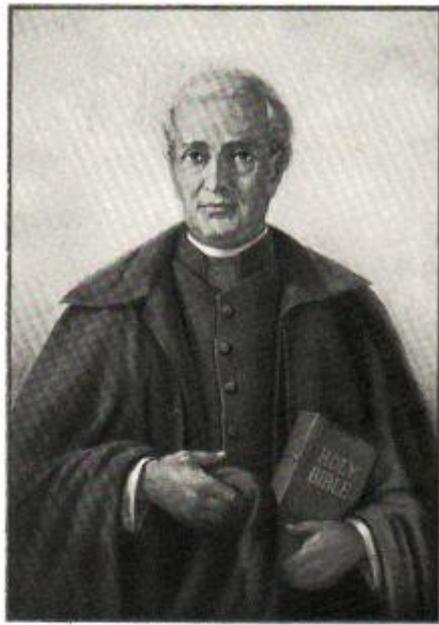
The Christian Brothers.

” Give to the poor in handfuls ‘ Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice.

The Christian Brothers in Cahersiveen 1860-1999

In 1856 Dr Egan, Bishop of Kerry died and left everything in his will to a number of priests including Fr. Edward Fitzgerald P.P Kilcummin.

Fr. Fitzgerald saw the need for a school for boys first in Miltown but the Presentation Brothers were already in the process of establishing there so he decided that the Christian Brothers should establish in Cahersiveen. The site was given to them by the family of the Liberator Daniel 'O Connell. It was also used as a workhouse at the time of the Famine. After the Famine it came into possession of Dr. Barry, who then gave it to the C.B.S. The people of Cahersiveen quickly accepted the proposal and Dr Barry, the local G.P offered the ‘ Temperance Room ‘ as a



EDMUND IGNATIUS RICE

*Founder and first Superior General
of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Ireland*

school. He also offered a house he owned ‘as a residence for a nominal rent. ‘ The two-storied ‘ Temperance Room ‘ was built by the people on a site given by the O’Connell family. It was used over the years as a reading room and as an auxiliary work-house during the famine. By the 1850s the ‘Temperance Room ‘ was owned by Dr Barry.

Bishop Moriarty at a meeting held in the church appealed to the people for funds for the school and Brother’s residence. The generosity of Bishop Egan and the people of Cahersiveen provided the necessary funds for the school and residence.

On 16th Jan 1860 the new school was opened and pupils from the town and surrounding area attended. The first Superior was Br. Austin Fitzgerald, brother of Fr Edward Fitzgerald who had provided the endowment for the school. Two other brothers, Joseph Manning and Joseph Buckley, completed the teaching staff. The Christian Brothers’ residence, the Monastery, was built in 1867-1868 costing £850.

The teaching of religion was central to all classes and prayers were said morning and afternoon on a daily basis. All pupils were expected to observe the requirements of the Church. The Brothers were also strong supporters of Irish Nationalism, the Irish language and Gaelic games.

Secondary Education was introduced in 1909 and proved a huge success and over the years the school was widely recognized as among the best second level school in the county if not the country. The school was particularly known for its constantly high achievements in Mathematics, Applied-Mathematics and Latin. Past pupils reached

the highest levels in the Civil Service, ESB, Education, Meteorological Service, Western Union Cable Station, Local Government, Law, Politics and the Irish Army. Many other past pupils followed their vocation and became priests and brothers.

The Secondary School closed in 1999 and the boys attended the convent secondary school, St. John Bosco. A few years later secondary education was provided by the partnership school Colaiste Na Scilge which was created as a result of the amalgamation of St. John Bosco and the Waterville and Cahersiveen Vocational schools. The primary school, Scoil Mhuire, is now under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry. The Christian Brothers provided an excellent education for the boys of Cahersiveen and surrounding area for almost 150 years.

Two brothers, Michael and Jerome Keating, were typical of a number of local boys who joined the Christian Brothers in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Keatings came from a small farm of some 30/40 acres at Knockeens just outside Cahersiveen. Like most families in the area fishing supplemented the family income. Over the years Br. Jerome Colm held many senior positions in the order and eventually was unanimously elected thirteenth Superior General in 1990. He was a progressive influence in education as he sought to advance changes such as lay principals, parents rights and Boards of Management in primary and secondary schools. At Br. Jerome Colm Keating's funeral mass on the 8th Oct 1999 Bro Edmund Garvey said ' As Superior General, he was honoured many times and in many places throughout the world. He was not always at home in these situations, but when such honours and hospitality came from poor people of this world, he truly enjoyed himself. ' (..from Jerome Colm Keating, Christian Brother Extraordinary, by Donal S. Blake cfc)

Today there is no presence of the C.B.S in Cahersiveen, with our school no longer under the management of the Christian Brothers. Today it's under lay management as the main parish boys school.



The Christian Brother's Monastery, Cahersiveen.

Here is a story of one of the Christian Brothers who gave over 100 years dedicated service to teaching the boys of Cahersiveen. This poem was written by local poet Dan 'O Neill.(Composed July 1950)

A BELOVED TEACHER (by Dan 'O Neill)

Weep no more, Mother, Weep no more today, For I'll sing you a song of Old Kentucky Home, My Old Kentucky Home far away,

Many years have rolled along, since we last heard that song, From the lips of saintly Brother Tom,

I refer to Brother Kelly, renowned in County Kerry, And from Derry to far Hong Kong.

Brother Tom was a saint, with a soul without a taint, For his boys he laboured day and night, To keep his narrow path that leads to Heaven's lights.

He begged from door to door, to educate the poor, For his boys he loved so well, He taught them as a Brother, to love one another, And to shun the road that leads to hell.

Now his boys are scattered wide, on this life's weary tide, Some have gone to join the Heavenly throng, But wherever that may be, they will often shed a tear, When they think of their beloved Brother Tom.

In January 1918 at the age of sixty-three. He died with a happy smile, So, on bended knee in this holy year, Let us pray a while

The Christian Brothers of Cahersiveen produced a Centenary Souvenir Record of their order covering 1860-1960 containing a learned article by the late Brother K.C Meers in which he stated:

‘What type of God-intoxicated Kerryman decided of old, to adventure all for the release of the spirit, to set up his abode of prayer and penance on the Sceilg...’

The word ‘monk’ means ‘solitary’. The practice of living in the wilderness, in order to get closer to God stems from the early middle-eastern Christian Church. In fact, it is generally accepted by historians that ‘the Egyptian spirit reigned in the ancient monastic foundations of the Irish and the Gauls’.

The cult of St. Michael was strong in the middle ages with a number of sites dedicated to him – St. Michael’s Mount in Cornwall, Monte Gargano in Italy and Mont-Saint Michel in Normandy with the barren Skelligs Michael pre-eminent as a place of learning, prayer and pilgrimage.

Tradition attributes this monastic foundation to St. Fionan in the sixth century. A community of some twelve monks at most, lived ascetic lives in these spartan conditions all year round. Perched on almost vertical windswept cliff walls, with its stone church, oratories, beehive cells, garden, graveyard, wells, stone terraces, retaining walls and cross stone slabs, the monastery is one of the most incredible and fascinating places in the world. The site combines a feat of engineering with a leap of faith.

Documentary evidence shows that the monastic site was plundered twice in the ninth century by the Vikings. The monk Giraldus Cambrensis states that it was abandoned in the twelfth century because it ‘being found bleak and going to and from it hazardous.’

Friar O’Sullivan writing in Louvain, Belgium in 1750, stated that it was ‘very much noted for pilgrimage over most of Europe.’

That sense of pilgrimage coupled with its strong attraction for tourists has, to this day, rendered St. Michael's Rock, a key element in the local economy of the Iveragh Peninsula. Boats leave the mainland from a variety of points during the summer months, for an unforgettable day trip. Travellers are enraptured by the Rock's sheer size, its pyramid-like symmetry and its 'other worldliness'. Skellig Michael has long been recognised as unique and in 1996, it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. *'..the last rock of an abandoned civilisation whose dim lights glimmered in a distant age to illuminate the edge of a future life.'*



June 1955; Rev Brother Barrett with the Kindergarten class At CBS Cahersiveen.



Cahersiveen Brass and Reed Band 1919/20



Plaque in honor of the Christian Brothers which can be found near Our Lay's Statue at the tower side of the church.



The new resting place for the Christian Brothers now beside the Presentation Sisters in the Church Yard near the old entrance to the Primary School off the Church