



The Servant of God Alphonse Lambe

1932 - 1959



LEGION OF MARY
FOUNDED 7 SEPTEMBER 1921

Who was Alphonsus Lambe?

- ▶ Alphonsus Lambe (also known as Alfie) was born in Tullamore, Ireland of the Feast of St. John, the Baptist, June 24, 1932, during the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, Ireland.
- ▶ When he was a little boy, Alfie was pale and delicate, but very clever child. From an early age, he was able to read. His brothers would tease him because he preferred reading religious books. The humble family were greatly loved by all, who knew them, and it was in that Christian environment, that Alfie's first year was spent. Alfie was intelligent, always smiling, but profoundly religious.



Who was Alphonsus Lambe?

It was at the early age of 13 years, that Alfie decided to enter the Congregation of the Irish Christian Brothers to be received in September 8, 1948, during the Feast of our Lady's Nativity, together with 49 other postulants in the Dublin Novitiate of the Congregation. But one day, he suffered a fainting attack during a lecture he had to give. The doctor who was consulted said, He was not a sick person but he was frail. He would hardly be able to stand up to the rigors of religious life. If he stayed on, there would be danger of more serious illness. So, the Brothers told him to go back to his family for a time. When he would gather strength, then they would be glad to welcome him back. For Alfie, it was the end of all his dreams. Now, he had to think of a job and accepted an office position in a mill in Tullamore.



Introduction to the Legion of Mary



- ▶ Returning home dejected, he later joined the Legion of Mary, where he realized his true vocation. The only reason he went with his brother to a local praesidium was that he has nothing else to do, and was fed up with his life. His brother Jack said later that Alfie was set on fire at the first legion meeting. He saw Mary in action there.
- ▶ In the first month of Legion life, he started to practice the True Devotion to Mary according to Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort.

Introduction to the Legion of Mary



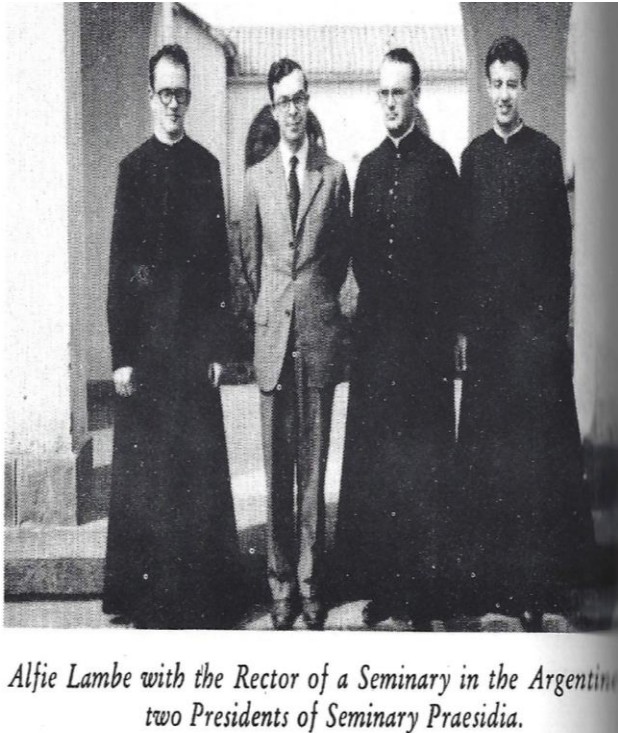
- ▶ The Legion works undertaken in Tullamore were many, but one special work was an active apostolate to the gypsies, who after stopped in Tullamore, they were visited in their caravans.
- ▶ Alfie Lambe was so delighted by the spirit in which the works were done. The effect on Alfie was electrifying. Depression and sadness was gone, and cheerfulness and energy returned. With all his soul, Alfie threw himself into the Legion works.

Full-time for the Legion of Mary



- ▶ When Alfie came back to Dublin, he worked full time for the Legion of Mary. Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, in his writings tells us that Mary, our Mother loves those who have consecrated themselves, she fosters and nurtures them, defends them, protects them, and intercedes for them. All these was evident in Alfie's life.
- ▶ Alfie had many chats with Frank Duff. We can only imagined how he learned the True Devotion from Frank Duff, who would have given many practical pieces of advice about the True Devotion. Together they would studied the Treatise in great depth.

Full-time for the Legion of Mary



*Alfie Lambe with the Rector of a Seminary in the Argentine
two Presidents of Seminary Praesidia.*

- ▶ With Alfie's quick intelligence and generous spirit, he accepted the ideal of living the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and saw that this meant salvation for others and holiness for himself.
- ▶ Alfie gained the love and respect of his fellow legionaries, when he made his Legion Promise, three (3) months after joining, according to the Legion Handbook, he had penetrated the essence of the association more profoundly than others after years of membership.
- ▶ To his mother, he said, "I believe I can do more good in the world than I could do in an Order." He considered no obstacle too great, no hardship, too severe, if by overcoming such handicaps, he could win another soul for Christ.

Extension Works for the Legion



Midnight, 15th July 1953, at Shannon Airport. Brothers Grace (centre) and Lambe (left) with Concilium President. Seven minutes later, the giant plane is in the air and Envoyship has begun.

- ▶ The Concilium had given Alfie the task of extending the Legion and supervising new groups in the most distant parts of Ireland. He sent a weekly report to his friend, Seamus Grace, of the works which he accomplished faithfully and competently. Naturally, it was a delicate task but a happy one for him. This apostolic joy is reflected in his report to Seamus who knew how to guide Alfie in his work, imparting opportune advice and guidance.

ENVOY TO SOUTH AMERICA



- ▶ One day, Alfie received the news that Seamus, his guide and friend, had been appointed Envoy of the Concilium to South America, and was even now preparing himself for the journey which he was soon to begin. Sure of his vocation at 20 years of age, Alfie offered himself to the Supreme Council of the Legion as an Envoy. At the meeting of the Concilium, on April 1953, both Legionaries were officially named as Envoys to South America.
- ▶ On the Feast of our Lady of Mt. Carmel, 1953, the Shannon Airport was the scene of a large gathering of Legionaries, as the two Envoys were about to leave for New York, from which a week later, they were to depart for Bogota, Columbia.

ENVOY TO SOUTH AMERICA

- ▶ In the Colombian capital, there was a happy reunion. Shortly before the two new Envoys arrived, **Joaquina Lucas**, a Filipino Envoy in Peru, arrived to meet them. Up to that date, she had been the only Envoy in South America. She used to be a college professor in a University in Manila, Philippines. **Pacita Santos, another Filipino, a young lawyer**, had been for a short period in Colombia as an Envoy.
- ▶ The facility and speed with which Alfie learned Spanish was really remarkable. Alfie worked extensively in Colombia. **Joaquina Lucas** was a great help to the new Envoys because she has travelled for years in the continent. She was able to give them many valuable tips from her wide experience in that country. The two envoys e

Four Legion Envoys participated



- Joaquina Lucas (Brazil)
- Maria Diepen (leaving for Dutch Guiana)
- Alfie Lambe (going from Ecuador to Argentina)
- Mary Clerkin (Brazil)

region.

TO ECUADOR



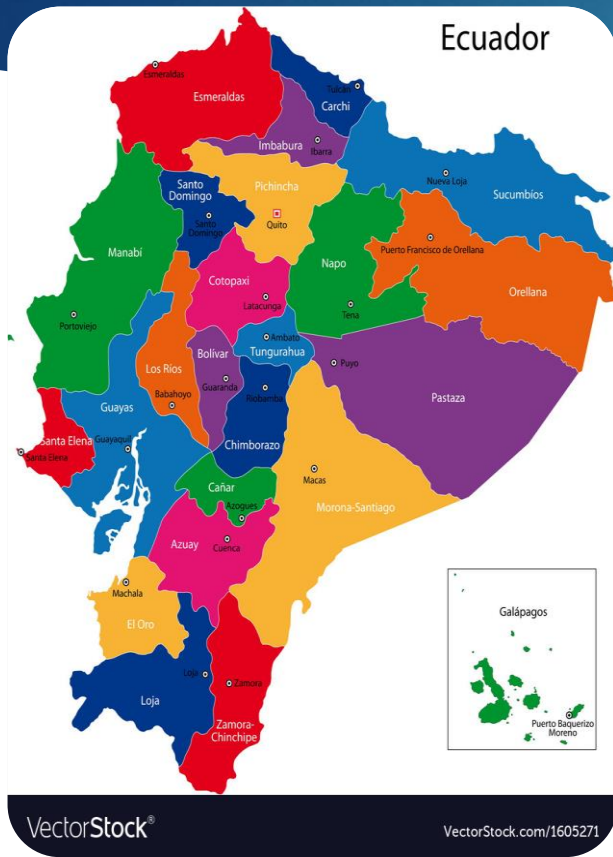
In 1954, the Concilium asked Alfie to go immediately to Ecuador, where the Bishop of Ambato had requested help for the founding of Legion of Mary in his diocese and received Alfie solicitously and the same Prelate became one of the strongest promoters of the Legion in Ecuador. At the reply of Alfie Lambe that the next day would be established the first two praesidia in Ambato, the Bishop responded, “Ah, that’s what I like. Much work and few words”. And so at the end of two weeks he had established four more praesidia.

TO ECUADOR



One day, the Bishop of Ambato invited Alfie to accompany him to Quito to attend the Bishops' Conference celebrating the Marian Year. The Bishop had decided to propose to the Bishops of Ecuador, the founding of the Legion of Mary.

TO ECUADOR



- ▶ In Quito the Bishop and Alfie visited the Papal Nuncio to whom they explained this initiative. The Papal Nuncio, who knew how the Legion was esteemed in Rome, replied that “Nothing would please him more”. Then at the meeting of Bishops, the Bishop of Ambato proposed to the Bishops of Ecuador the founding of the Legion in all Ecuadorian dioceses.

TO ECUADOR



▶ Alfie, simply and calmly, addressed the Bishops in a language he had only learned to speak a few months before, thanked them for the decisions they had taken and offering them his services. Returning to Ambato on March 25, 1954, the first Curia was established, with 8 praesidia attached.

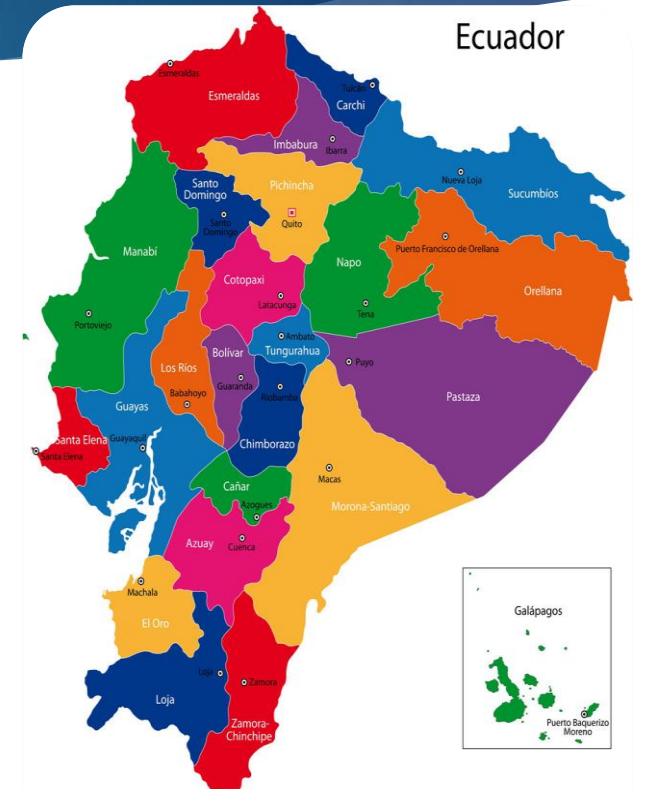
TO ECUADOR

- ▶ Having received permission, Alfie soon set up several praesidia in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. He set up praesidia among lepers and in prisons and his efforts resulted in the formation of Curia in June, 1954. Other dioceses soon followed. Thus began the great task, gigantic but sure, that Alfie Lambe was to accomplish in almost six years.



TO ECUADOR

► From Colombia, four legionaries arrived to help the Envoy. With them, he was able to cover a vast area, covering nine dioceses. In Bahia alone, they set up **twenty praesidia in two weeks**. Such was the rapid extension that in the spring of 1955 all the dioceses of Ecuador had got the Legion.



TO BOLIVIA



▶ The Apostolic Nuncios of Ecuador, Colombia and Bolivia held a meeting in Quito. The latter said to Alfie, “we need you urgently in Bolivia. Your work here maybe considered as finished.” Alfie was happy to consent. He wrote, as suggested, to the Archbishop of La Paz. The latter replied by return mail “Come to us, we will receive you as an Envoy of the Lord and of the Concilium”.

In Peru “the Missing Envoy”



- ▶ When Alfie went to Peru, he thought he will get a chance of some rest or a vacation, but he had been busier than ever. *Alfie never got to bed before midnight, and generally it was at that hour that he took supper.* For five weeks, there had been no word from Alfie to the Concilium in Dublin and he had been labelled “the Missing Envoy,” for usually he had reported weekly through Frank Duff, giving some details of his work. The concern disappeared upon receipt of a bulky envelope postmarked Brazil.

In Peru “the Missing Envoy”

- ▶ Alfie explained that in the past weeks, they had been ones of intense work and mad activity. They had journeyed through Peru, by plane, train, bus and donkey and even on foot, sometimes burnt brown by the strong tropical sun, at others frozen by the icy winds from the mountain summits.



In Peru “the Missing Envoy”



- ▶ The net results of our effort are the following: new Curiae in Peru and the first Curia in Bolivia in the capital, La Paz. This was inaugurated with the attendance of the Archbishop of La Paz, who attended the meeting, giving evidence of his conviction that the Legion was destined to do great things in Bolivia. When I wrote this report, we were flying over the peaks of the Andes in Bolivia at 17,000 feet.
- ▶ He was writing from the plane because it was the only free time he had left. It is not enough to read these lines written by Alfie to realize the intensity of his labors.

BRAZIL



In July, 1955, the International Eucharistic Congress took place in Rio de Janeiro. The Envoy, Joaquina Lucas, was engaged in spreading the Legion throughout Brazil. She was joined by Alfie and the two new Envoys, Mary Clerkin, an Irish girl and Maria Diepen, from the Netherlands. Mary was assigned to work in Brazil with Joaquina Lucas, and Maria to work in French and Dutch Guyana. The four Envoys, with legionaries of Rio de Janeiro staffed a Legion Information booth which had been assigned to the Legion in the Congress Hall. There, they were able to meet Cardinals, Archbishops, priests, religious and laity, conquering all for the Legion.

BRAZIL



- ▶ In Brazil, the Envoys decided that Joaquina Lucas would work in the North, while Mary Clerkin, assisted by Alfie, would work in the South, together with five legionaries of Rio de Janeiro who had offered to help them. Results: 25 praesidia founded in one month by the seven legionaries. They also founded a praesidium among Polish residents and one in the Oriental Rite.

ARGENTINA



On October 15, 1955, the Curia of Sao Paulo was erected. After that, Alfie began his journey to Argentina, for he had received a telegram from the Concilium that recommends a Legion campaign in the country. The work that awaits Alfie was really huge. In Buenos Aires, there existed only a few praesidia, which he had been permitted to set up in Religious houses, but not in the parishes.

ARGENTINA



▶ The Nuncio to Argentina, whom Alfie first visited, promised him that in the Annual Bishop Conference he would promote the Legion. The Archbishop of Rosario, promised him the same. But said must wait for the Conference before beginning work. As a result of these recommendations, during the following year, he had visited almost all the more than eight dioceses.

ARGENTINA



- ▶ The Nuncio in La Paz wrote “ the country needs you now, tomorrow will be too late”. Hence, Alfie was very happy to get word from Concilium that a Welsh Legionary, would probably go as an Envoy to Bolivia. More than six Bolivian Bishops had asked for the Legion.
- ▶ It was arranged that the two Envoys would meet in Asuncion. Paraguay and from there after a short stay, the new Envoy, Oonagh Twomey would depart for her field of action, Bolivia.

PARAGUAY



- ▶ Previously, the American Redemptorists, had set up the Legion in their parish in Asuncion, and now had several praesidia. It was decided to visit these praesidia and perhaps do some extension. The two Envoys visited the Archbishop, who from the beginning had been a keen supporter of the Legion, and who now authorized them to set up the Legion in all parishes of his Archdiocese. Thus, the Legion spread rapidly, with many praesidia.

PARAGUAY



- ▶ On January, 1957 a second curia was erected in Asuncion, with a dozen praesidia attached, and further curia was set up in Villarica. Seamus Grace had returned after three years to Ireland, and had married a Legionary. Alfie had hoped that Seamus would go to Ecuador. Now this could not be. So Alfie asked the Concilium to allow him to return to that country. In Ecuador, Alfie was able to see that the Legion had flourished and had multiplied, coming to be recognized “the Catholic movement most significant in the nation.”

AGAIN TO BOLIVIA AND ECUADOR

- ▶ After spending a week in Peru, Alfie continued the journey to Bolivia, with the help of a group of Ecuadorian seminarians. As there was already a Curia in La Paz, and also as Oonagh Twomey was there, it was suggested to Alfie that he should try his luck in Oruro. The city was the center of the mining region, and principally populated by miners and regarded as the hotbed of communism.

AGAIN TO BOLIVIA AND ECUADOR

- ▶ Alfie and the seminarians spent more than two weeks, founding ten praesidia, culminating two weeks later, with the erection of the first Curia on September 7, 1957. The Bishop of Oruro attended the Inaugural meeting.

RETURN TO ARGENTINA



▶ When Alfie was in Argentina, we may recall that the Legion had not yet been introduced into Buenos Aires, which at the time constituted only one diocese. The growth of the city made it imperative to subdivide it into various sectors, with a Bishop in charge of each one of them.

RETURN TO ARGENTINA

- ▶ One of these Bishops, a Salesian, had no doubt about the Legion in his diocese. Little by little, the other Bishops of the new dioceses opened their doors to the Legion, and on December 9, 1957, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires granted permission for the Legion in his Archdiocese.



URUGUAY



▶ At the beginning of 1958, Alfie was able to fulfill one of his apostolic aspirations, to journey to Uruguay. A few praesidia had existed in Montevideo, the capital, founded by foreign priests, but these no longer existed. As was his custom, Alfie visited the Nuncio, who had known the Legion in Paris. Our Envoy could not have hoped for a better reception and support.

URUGUAY



The Archbishop of Montevideo was likewise warm in his support and at once authorized the founding of the Legion in his Archdiocese. Between Uruguay and Argentina, Alfie worked with ceaseless labours, going from one country to the other in frequent journeys. In June, 1958, he set up a Curia in Montevideo.

BISHOPS WHO TOOK THE LEGION PROMISE!!!



Archbishop Bogarin of
the Archdiocese of
Paraguay - Legion of
Mary member

- ▶ Monsignor Corso, the Auxiliary Bishop of Montevideo, Bishop Bogarin, the Auxiliary Bishop of Asuncion, Paraguay and other Latin American bishops, publicly took the Legion Promise on the day of their episcopal consecration.

ENVOY WITHOUT REST

- ▶ As Alfie had been suffering from dysentery and stomach trouble for sometime, he had been urged to rest and confine himself to sending out teams on the work of extending the Legion. But he could not rest. One thing that caused him great joy at that time was the erection in Buenos Aires of a Curia with 23 praesidia. This was on August 4, 1958.

ENVOY WITHOUT REST

- ▶ In December of that year, the Archbishop of Cordoba approved the founding of the Legion in his diocese and gave his blessings to Alfie, who undertook the initial work. However, Alfie was feeling very ill, due to a bleeding ulcer, and after vomiting blood was taken urgently to the hospital. After treatment, the bleeding ceased, but an operation was recommended.

ENVOY WITHOUT REST



- ▶ The Concilium recommended his return to Ireland for a prolonged test and treatment. On January 9, 1959, Alfie was operated on in a hospital in Buenos Aires and the surgeons found extensive lymphatic sarcoma, the most virulent form of cancer. His days are numbered.

“ALFIE JOINED EDEL TODAY”

- ▶ The campaign has ended. Here lies a Legionary, nobly dead, with his weapons in his hands. At last has come the hour, to be confirmed in his service; for all eternity he will be a Legionary because the Legion is what has forged his eternal destiny, has been the fiber and mold of his spiritual life. These beautiful words are from the Legion Handbook and characterized the passing of Alfie Lambe.

“ALFIE JOINED EDEL TODAY”

FUNERAL



- ▶ The Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires gave him the Last Sacrament, and the Papal Nuncio imparted his blessings. A large group of priests and legionaries accompanied his remains to the tomb of the Irish Christian Brothers in the Recoleta Cemetery in Buenos Aires where he was buried, fittingly among the Congregation in which he had served his noviceship. while trying his vocation. There the full Legion prayers were recited.
- ▶ With such certainty, one of the telegrams from Mary Clerkin, Envoy in Brazil received by the Concilium read: “ALFIE HAS JOINED EDEL TODAY.”

CAUSE FOR BEATIFICATION

- ▶ The cause for Alfie's beatification was introduced by the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires in 1978.
- ▶ Since Alfie Lambe died on January 21, 1959, the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires has undertaken the mission of introducing his cause. Testimonies, letters, pictures, relics and reports on graces received have been meticulously gathered. However, since the death of Postulator, Fr. Luca de Rossa, OFM, progress has slowed down somewhat. Thus, the circumstances of visiting Rome and having the chance of meeting Fr. Giovangiuseppe Califano, was a real blessing.

CAUSE FOR BEATIFICATION



Uruguay: Group of Montevideaa Legionaries with Mgr. Pascal Tekeyan, parish priest of the Armenian Catholics in Montevideo. Alfie Lambe on right.

- ▶ He gave valuable tips on how to promote Alfie's cause, but more importantly, he agreed to become the new causes' new Postulator. He was the Postulator for the cause of Pope St. John XXIII.

CAUSE FOR BEATIFICATION

- ▶ On January 17, 2020, the Ordinary Congress of the Congregation for the causes of saints appointed Msgr. Jose Jaime as Relator for the cause of Alfie Lambe.
- ▶ In the meantime, we must all ask Alfie Lambe for graces and miracles, and report them to Concilium, when we received them.
- ▶ One miracle is needed in order to beatify him, and one more miracle, for his canonization.



Alfie Lambe, Fr. Mijica (Venezuela) and Frank Duff at Dublin Airport.

UNFINISHED WORKS



*our envoys in South America, R/L Maria Diepen, Alfie
Mary Clerkin and Joaquina Lucas.*

- ▶ Before his death, Alfie expressed his desire to go to Russia and help with the conversion of that country. Alfie's apostolic zeal was universal. He had begun to learn Russian, had made the necessary arrangements for the translation of the Handbook of the Legion into Russian. He had even approached the Russian Embassy to seek a visa. He increased his contacts with the Russian Orthodox Christians, which constituted a numerous group in Buenos Aires. He had even planned to go to Russia as a student. In the new passport issued to him shortly before his death, he had written: "Student".

UNFINISHED WORKS

- ▶ Alfie explained his conquests, simply in the following words: “I know that when I am sent by Christ, I can do all things. With this faith, I live the Legion, and I take His love to people of every condition. ”His strength was based on a faith perfectly serene and unlimited confidence in the Most Holy Virgin”.

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.