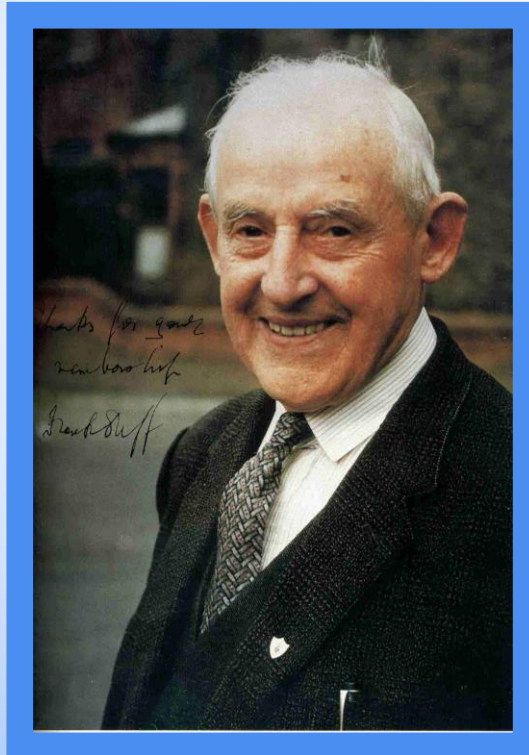


Servant of God, Frank Duff Founder of the Legion of Mary



June 7, 1889 – November 7, 1980

Servant of God, Frank Duff

Founder of the Legion of Mary



Frank Duff was born June 7, 1889, the eldest of 7 children of John Duff and Susan Laetitia Freehill in Dublin, Ireland, #97 Phibsboro Road

Servant of God, Frank Duff Founder of the Legion of Mary

MICHAEL FRANCIS FREEHILL

Frank Duff's grandfather was the first Catholic headmaster of a state – run school since Penal laws were enacted 150 year before. He had three sons and one daughter- Susan Laetitia Freehill, the mother of Frank Duff - an accomplished pianist and singer. Michael Francis Freehill had a pupil, John Duff, the father of Frank Duff, a very dedicated man and provided well for his family.

A Catholic Family - The Duffs



**John Duff
(died 1918)**



**(from l-r) Frank, Isabel,
Eva. John Edwin, Sara-
Geraldine and Ailish
(seated on Frank's lap)**



**Susan Laetitia
Freehill (died
1950)**

A Catholic Family - The Duffs

Frank Duff had a wonderful and loving relationship with his parents. From his father, he learned much of life and was well provided for - which would become the foundation of his caring and loving attitude towards his siblings. His mother was always patient and loving, and so was he to her. This relationship he had with his earthly mother, would be made more special and real upon his deepening relationship with Our Blessed Mother.

A Catholic Family - The Duffs

After the death of his father, Frank Duff, the eldest, was to become the main support of his family. He took care of his mother and his siblings and was extremely affected by their sickness and deaths, which eventually left Frank the last survivor in his family. He described his situation after the death of his father: “..and from that moment on, I was head of the house, and I was completely necessary and there was no thought in my mind of anything else but attending to that. I had the fullest sense of responsibility for my brothers and sisters, I regarded myself as responsible for them. I had no idea of marriage for instance.”
(from Dr. F. Kennedy “Frank Duff A Life Story”)

Youth and Athletic Life



Frank Duff had a normal childhood growing up and was involved in athletics. He enjoyed swimming, tennis, cycling and athletics. In 1911, he participated in the Donore Harrier's Invitation Race (running) and finished in the middle of the field with around sixty runners. He was runner-up in the men's singles finals at Drumcondra. He had a strong physical endurance - on May 31, 1914, he completed a 155 mile cycle trip in a day. He was also a cricket player and it was unfortunate that a cricket ball struck him behind the ear causing hearing problems for him later on in his life.

Life at a Catholic School



At Blackrock College, Frank studied religion that covered three categories - Christian Doctrine, Scripture and Church History. The Holy Ghost fathers made the environment of the school religious with pictures of saints hanging on the walls of the schools. Statues of Saint Joseph, Saint Patrick's, Saint Peter and Saint Paul were seen in the campus. On the quadrangle of the school is a beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady (entitled Tutela Domus - Protectress of the House).

Education

Frank Duff studied at Blackrock College (April 17, 1899) a school run by the Holy Ghost Fathers. He was an excellent student with a keen intellect and diverse set of talents and interests.



- Won First-Class Exhibition Award for Modern Literature.
- Second place (missing it by half a mark) in the Irish Examinations.
- Won first place in mock up exams for History and Geography. He also excelled in literature and languages such as Irish, English, Greek and Latin. (This is perhaps why in choosing the nomenclature for the Legion of Mary, he opted to use Latin.

Civil Service Career



After passing the civil service exam (where he was ranked first in Ireland and 16th in the United Kingdom) Frank Duff would enter the Civil Service in 1908 and worked in the Land Commission as a Second Division Clerk. Though, he did not like math at school, he studied it nevertheless and because of his natural intelligence, he developed for the Land Commission a new method of calculating annuities, sinking fund and interest. At the age of only 45 years old, he retired from his Civil Service career to work full time for the Legion of Mary.

Member of Saint Vincent de Paul



In 1913, Frank Duff was recruited to Saint Vincent de Paul Society by his friend Jack O'Callaghan. His decision to join this organization for the poor would change the whole landscape of his life and the entire world as it was a key event leading to the formation of the largest lay organization for evangelization in the Church, the Legion of Mary. The Legion system and its apostolic works, its spirit, prayers and the general manner of conducting the meeting has its roots in the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

Member of Saint Vincent de Paul



Tom Fallon



Joe Gabbett

Frank Duff met many great Catholic men with courage, commitment and genuine concern for the poor as a member of Saint Vincent de Paul Society... people like Joe Gabbett (who showed him how to evangelize in words and action); Vincent Kelly (who introduced him to True Devotion to Mary); Tom Fallon (who urged him to re-read True Devotion over again); Tom Lalor (a trusted friend and ally); Ulick McNally (who showed him the art of home visitation) - were some of the men who shaped Frank Duff's will and determination towards the salvation of souls.

Pioneer Association

Frank Duff was also a 'reluctant member' of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association. And as one could have expected, it was his friend, Joe Gabbett a recovering alcoholic who influenced him to join this group. Saint Vincent de Paul was only composed of men (at that time) and it was through the Pioneer Association that women can be recruited to do volunteer work. Amazingly, the Pioneer Association greatly influenced the Legion system and from its members in the Myra House, the first praesidium of the Association of Our Lady of Mercy first met on September 7, 1921.

Frank Duff's Spirituality

After a year of joining Saint Vincent de Paul, during the Lenten season of 1914, Frank Duff committed to attending Mass each day. This daily commitment continued beyond the Lenten and Easter seasons of his life because he made it a point to attend a daily Mass. He also attended annual retreats (for 48 years) at Mount Melleray, a Cistercian Abbey in County Waterford. He also made forty nine pilgrimages to Lough Derg. Amongst everything else, he had a special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He took to heart, the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, challenging every Christian to care for each other person totally both in the physical but more importantly spiritual sense.



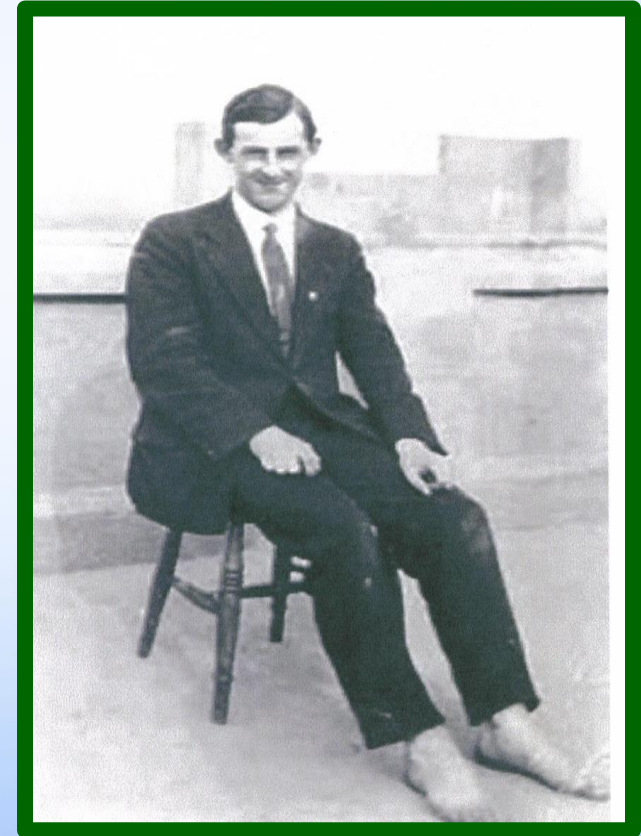
Frank Duff's Spirituality

He would also spend hours in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament, prayed the Divine Office daily in Latin, and of course recited the Holy Rosary every day of his life. In 1916, at a young age of 27, he wrote the book, "Can We Be Saints?" Perhaps it is no coincidence that Frank Duff clearly and primarily established as "the glory of God through the holiness of its members..." (Handbook page 11). He believed that everyone is called to be a saint. "And I do not ask big things - the life of a missionary or a monk, or those others I see around me so full of accomplishment. I do not ask for any of these but simply set my face to follow unswervingly, untiringly, the common life which day by day stretches before me, satisfied in it that I love you, and try to make you loved." (from Frank Duff, "Can We Be Saints?")

Frank Duff's Spirituality



Frank Duff with fellow retreatants at Mount Melleray Abbey.



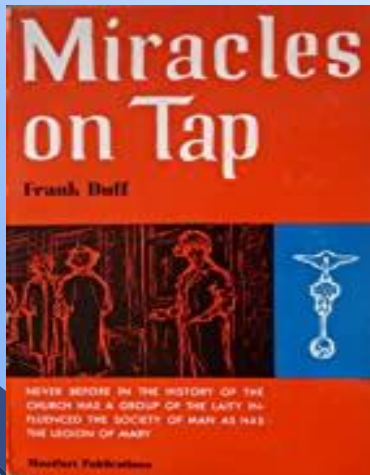
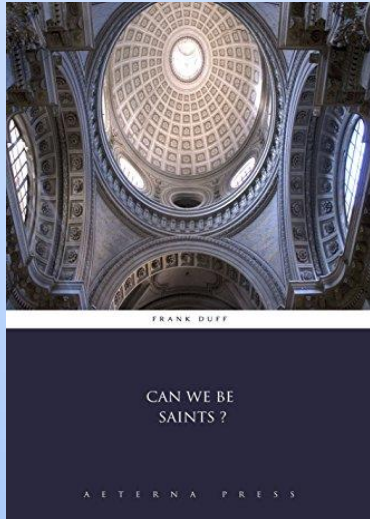
Frank Duff at Lough Derg, barefooted as part of the traditional ritual to this sanctuary of St. Patrick.

Frank Duff - Author and Writer



Frank Duff had a passion for writing and that is because he had a passion for the truth. It is estimated that in addition to the countless number of articles, essays and books, he wrote more than 20,000 letters to members and officers of the Legion of Mary worldwide. His writings reflect his solid and orthodox Catholic faith and his patriotism to his native land, Ireland. However, among the many books and articles he had authored, nothing could ever surpass the success of his 'best seller', the **Legion Handbook** now read by more than 10 million people since its initial release and translated to more than 50 languages world wide.

Some Books and Articles by Frank Duff



“Can We Be Saints”

“Miracles on Tap”

“Victory Through Mary”

“Mary Shall Reign”

“Understanding the Doctrine of the Mystical Body”

“True Devotion to the Nation”

“The Spirit of Home Visitation”

“Abraham”

“Everyone Must Pour Himself unto...”

“The New Eve”

Papal Encounters

Frank Duff was blessed to have met and spoken to every Pope during his lifetime. Under different occasions and circumstances he met the following Vicars of Christ:

Pope Pius XI (May 23, 1931)

Pope Pius XII (1952)

Saint Pope John XXIII (March 21, 1960)

Pope Paul VI (December 11, 1965)

Saint Pope John Paul II (May 1979)

** Frank Duff was scheduled to attend the installation of Pope John Paul I but did not happen because of the latter's unexpected death.*



Lay Observer Vatican II

In 1965, Pope Paul VI sent an invitation to Frank Duff to be a Lay Observer at the Second Vatican Council. This invitation was indeed an honor and recognition of the contribution of the Legion in lay evangelization. The Council Fathers recognizing the potential of lay people in evangelization formed a commission to define the laity's role on the Church's missionary purpose or evangelization of the world as commanded by Jesus Christ Himself. The result was Pope Paul VI's decree called "*Apostolicam Actuositatem*" (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity).

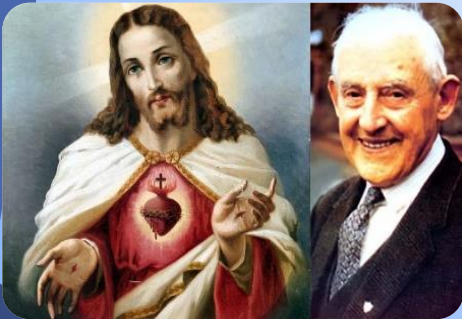
Cardinal Leon-Joseph Suenens, a great ally of the Legion of Mary, an advocate of True Devotion to Mary and author of the biography of Edel Quinn, summed up the Legion's influence on this decree by stating that the Legion evangelizing spirit "anticipated Vatican II." It has also been revealed that at the commission level for the formulation of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, the Legion of Mary Handbook was consulted by the formulators

Frank Duff - not the founder of the Legion of Mary (in a conventional sense!)

Frank Duff did not accept that he was the 'founder' of the Legion of Mary in a conventional sense of having completed pre-set plans and strategies in the setting up of the organization. In a letter to Cardinal Suenens, he wrote: "As a particular request I would ask that you omit reference to me as "Founder of the Legion." To his mind, Frank Duff believe that there are two types of founders - deliberate and accidental. "... the Legion seems to bear innumerable marks of a providential origin and mission. Its beginnings and early growth were not the result of clever framing and planning." (Fom the book, Frank Duff a Life Story by Finola Kennedy)

Last Day

- In the morning of November 7, 1980, First Friday of the month, Frank Duff attended two Masses - his regular Mass as part of his Devotion to the Sacred Heart and a Funeral Mass for a great member of the Legion of Mary, Joan Cronin, an envoy of 17 years to many countries. After the Funeral Mass, already not feeling that well, he was still very accommodating and friendly to those who approached and greeted him. Little did they know these would be his final set of good-byes to his many friends in the Legion of Mary. Later in the afternoon, Mrs. Jessop his housekeeper would bring him his tea found Frank Duff already dead. Frank Duff's death brought shockwaves to the whole of Ireland. His funeral was attended by more than 4,000 people, dignitaries and the ordinary men and women of Dublin.



FRANK DUFF WAS BORN ON JUNE 7, 1889, FIRST FRIDAY. HE DIED ON NOVEMBER 7, 1980, FIRST FRIDAY. HE HAD AN OVERWHELMING DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.



**WORDS OF
WISDOM FROM
FRANK DUFF**



Legion of Mary

“It does not require from its members wealth or influence, but faith unwavering; not famous deeds but only unrelaxed effort; not genius but unquenchable love; not giant strength but steady discipline.”

- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“The praesidium is like a class. You come and you learn how everything is to be done. The chief teachers are the Spiritual Director and the President, but as well, everybody else must take a part in the meeting. You must not let it be regarded as the type of classroom where only the teacher speaks.”

- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members developed by prayer and active co-operation, under ecclesiastical guidance, in Mary’s and the Church’s work of crushing the head of the serpent and advancing the reign of Christ.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary

“Nothing can stand in the way of success except want of trust. If there be but faith enough, God will utilise us to conquer the world for him.”

- Frank Duff,
Founder, Legion of Mary





Legion of Mary

“A rock in the crisis; but constant at all times. Hoping for success; humble in success; but independent of it; fighting failure; undismayed by it; fighting on, and wearing it down; thriving upon difficulties and monotony, because they give scope for the faith and effort of an enduring siege.”

- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“Legion appeals unceasingly for a sterner temper, and from each succeeding meeting sends its members to their tasks with the unchanging watchword, as it were, ringing in their ears: “Hold firm.”

- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary

“The Catholic who believes in the Church, and loves it up to the point of being prepared to work for it, that is the only sort of love that means anything.”

- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“The Legion demands of you that you love the Church in a practical way. To work for it, to suffer for it, and if needs be, to die for it.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary

“Mass and Communion mean a day perfectly begun – and that is half the battle.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



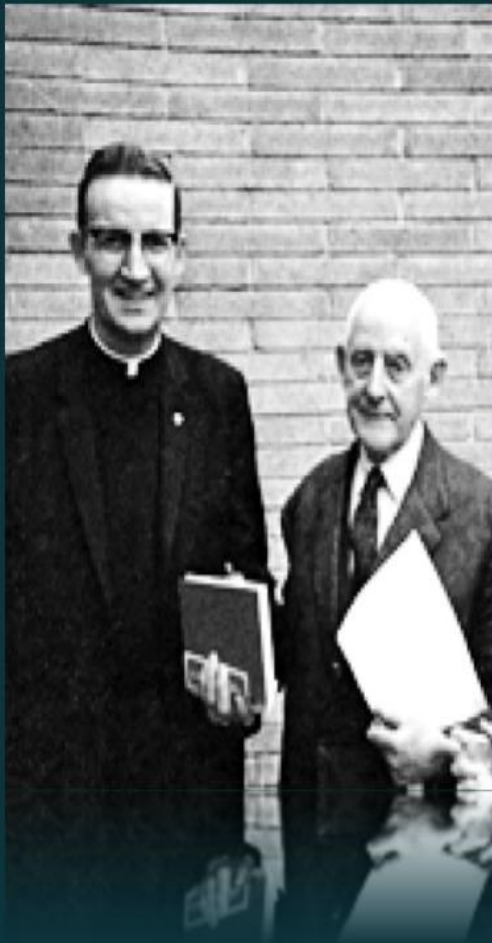
“The fruit of loyalty is obedience, and the test of the latter is the readiness to accept situation.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary

“You are a Legionary during what might be called your secular hours, that is during your whole life.”

- Frank Duff,
Founder,
Legion of Mary



“Real achievement is dependent upon sustained effort, which in turn is the outcome of an unconquerable will to win.” - Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“A lifelong perseverance in the work of the apostolate is in itself heroic, and will only be found as the culmination of a continuous series of heroic acts, as indeed it is their reward.”

**- Frank Duff,
Founder, Legion
of Mary**



“The secret of all success with others lies in the establishment of personal contact, the contact of love and sympathy. This love must be more than an appearance. It must be able to stand up to the tests that real friendships can bear.”

- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“The Legion’s trust in Mary is limitless, knowing that by the ordinance of God, her power is without limit.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary

Frank Duff
FOUNDER, LEGION OF MARY
www.legionofmary.org.uk



“The legionaries’ essential mainstay must be this knowledge of the companionship of God, their good Father, in their twofold work of sanctifying themselves and serving their neighbour.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary

Frank Duff
FOUNDER, LEGION OF MARY
www.legionofmary.org.uk



“Legionary, your firm support is Mary. Lean upon her with complete trust. She will not fail you, for she is deeply rooted in that humility which is vital to you.” – **Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary**

“The imitation of Mary’s humility is both the root and instrument of Legionary action.”

– **Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary**





“The Legion’s battle for souls must begin in the heart of the individual legionary. Each one must wage the battle with himself, determinedly conquering in his heart the spirit of pride and self.”
- Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary



“Prayer is the bond which thus unites all hearts and voices, making them as one.” - Frank Duff, Founder, Legion of Mary