



OFS: Secular Franciscan Order (& YouFra)

The Third Order of St. Francis in Ireland.

National Newsletter July 2025

“To follow Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis”

Website: ofsireland.org



OFS Cork



Members of the OFS Cork fraternity recently visited the *Third Order Plot* at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Cork. The Plot was put in place in the 19th Century by the Third Order Fraternity at Holy Trinity (Capuchin), to cater for its members who could not afford individual graves or who perhaps simply wanted to be buried with other tertiaries. The photo was taken at the tomb of Father Mathew, the famous Capuchin of the Temperance Movement and founder of St. Joseph's Cemetery. (left to right) Alan, Denise, Maurice, Anthony, Ciaran, Fr. Michael OFM (who officiated), and Jane. Picture was taken by Steve (OSF Novice) bringing our number present to eight.

Little Nellie of Holy God

In a convent cemetery overlooking Cork city rest the remains of one of the most extraordinary personages of our land and times. Little Nellie of Holy God (Nellie Organ) died on 2nd February 1908 at the age of four and a half years. Her influence in spreading devotion to the Eucharist and influencing Pope St. Pius X (through a book on her life) to significantly reduce the age of receiving First Communion, were out of proportion to her tender age and diminutive frame. Orphaned of her mother young, placed in care by her father who was in the navy, unwell with various illnesses during her short life, Nellie demonstrated a yearning for Holy Communion that led the Mother Superior of her Orphanage, her carers and the Bishop of Cork to recognise her holiness and obtain permission to make her First Communion at four years and four months. Profound preparation and thanksgiving, mystical knowledge beyond explanation, evident intercession and wise counsel made her a soul apart. The fact that she did all of this while retaining and amplifying the natural loveliness and playful nature of a child was further evidence of authenticity. She knew if somebody had been to Holy Communion or not, whether Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was taking place in the chapel (she would say “Holy God is not in the lock-up today”) and beg to be taken to visit.

If Nellie were raised to the honour of the Altars, Ireland would have a special patron to proclaim the captivating love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is easy to see how she echoed the sentiment of St. Francis that “Love is not loved!” and compensated for this deficit which has grown great. Since the convent closed in the 1990’s access to her grave has been difficult. There are plans to develop the convent site for residency which should make the terrain more navigable. Many hope however, that she and others buried there might be moved to a more fitting location where pilgrims can visit freely.

By Maurice O'Brien of President (Minister) Cork Fraternity

St Joseph of Cupertino

Saint Joseph of Cupertino was from Italy. He was a Grey Franciscan Friar and he is the patron saint of people with special needs, students and people doing exams. Joseph is my favourite saint because like me, it is believed he lived with special needs. He struggled with reading, writing and learning. When he prayed he would float above the ground and it is said that he would speak to God in visions, which are like having dreams while you are awake. It has also been said that Joseph healed sick children and caused blind people to see.

By Robert Comber who has begun formation in the OFS Galway Fraternity

Congratulations to Br Salvador, a great friend and supporter of the OFS, on his 100th birthday. Rath Dé ort!

Save the Date : National Assembly Saturday September 6th 2025. Details to follow soon

Thanks to all contributors. Items ideally 50 to 100 words. Feedback welcome. Send items to irelandofs@gmail.com