



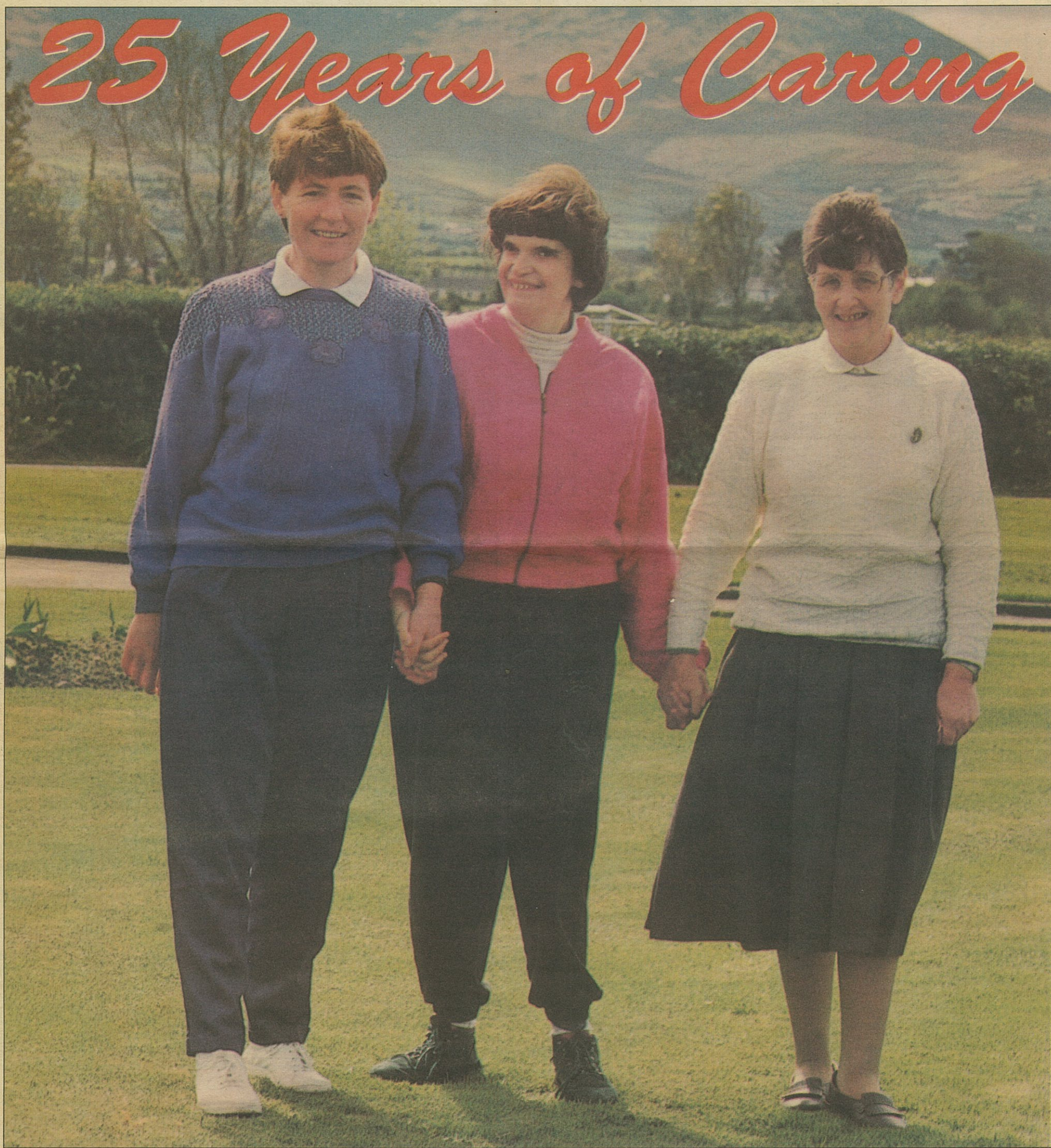
The Kerryman

Friday, April 30, 1993



**COLOURPLUS**

# *25 Years of Caring*



**St. Mary of the Angels, Beaufort**



# Beaufort's Silver Jubilee

**S**T Mary of the Angels at Beaufort, the home founded by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Motherhood for the care of the mentally handicapped of Kerry, this week-end begins a year of celebrations to mark the silver jubilee of its foundation.

A Mass of Thanksgiving is being celebrated in St Mary's Cathedral, Killarney, at 3 pm on Saturday by Bishop Diarmuid Ó Suilleabháin with Archbishop Dermot Clifford of Cashel and Emly presiding.

Residents of the home will be joined at the celebration by priests, the community at Beaufort, parents, medical, nursing and other staff, voluntary workers, friends, benefactors and the general public.

Dr Clifford, who was the home's first chaplain when he was diocesan secretary in Kerry, will preach the homily and the attendance will include Sr Mary Rose Doyle, whose parents donated their house and land to the Franciscan nuns and made possible what is sometimes called the Miracle of Beaufort.

Over £10 million has been invested in St Mary of the Angels over the last 25 years to create a complex which caters for 107 residents and about 150 non-residents who enjoy the services of its school and its day care and respite care facilities.

There has been no price put on the work, love and care which has been invested in the special people — and their families — in that time.

It has been a priceless gift to the people of Kerry.



The general staff at St Mary of the Angels. Front (from left): Joan O'Shea, Breda Counihan, Eileen O'Connor, Joan Kissane, Josephine Twiss, Mary O'Driscoll, Audrey Bainton, Mary O'Shea, Eileen Bainton, Mike Joy. Centre: John O'Doherty, Jackie McGillicuddy, Eleanor Clifford, Eileen Foley, Elizabeth Joy, Rose Christian, Catherine Breen, Anne Williams, Marie O'Donoghue, Eileen Hurley, Donie Courtney, Pádraig Moriarty, Peter O'Shea. Back: Jerry Costello, Catherine Hunt, Rita Coffey, Eileen Moriarty, Sheila Kelliher, Mary O'Shea, Mary Breen, Bernie O'Shea, Betty Gowan and Sinead Dowd.

## Miracle of love at St Mary of the Angels

By Breda Joy

**A** FRANCISCAN sister on a visit to Beaufort was startled to hear the stillness of Easter Sunday broken by the roar of motorbikes in the driveway. Her amazement increased further as the bikers, dressed in leather and looking like the cast of a Hells Angels movie, came into view.

They ground to a halt outside the front door of the home and delivered their cargo — a huge supply of chocolate Easter eggs for the children.

Sister Colm Sheils told this story from her office looking out onto the magnificent blue-purple sweep of the McGillicuddy Reeks as she elaborated on the diversity of people who have become part of the story of St Mary of the Angels over the last quarter of a century.

The generosity of that group of bikers was merely one drop in an ocean of kindness which rolls towards Beaufort from all over the county. Sr Colm traces the genesis of that generous spirit back to Mary and Denis Doyle who donated their farm to the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood which their only daughter, Mary Rose entered.

"When they gave the place to the Order, they set off a whole chain of events," Sr Colm said. "Through their generosity, hundreds of people have been helped and cared for. They had one child, Mary Rose, but, in a way, they have got a huge extended family out there. In their wildest dreams, they never thought this would happen."

In a way, the first Franciscan sisters who came to Beaufort never thought it could happen either. They had no prior experience of work with children with learning difficulties. Their original suggestion was to set up a home for the elderly.

"Looking at it now, it was an act of faith," Sr Colm said.

Launching out in faith, they experienced an unbelievable response from the public — a response which has grown steadily through the years.

"The Kerry people have taken it to their hearts and have really been behind it all the way," Sr Colm said. "Maybe it was because they were children. Our experience has been that people couldn't do enough for us."

A native of County Meath, Sr Colm is the administrator of St Mary of the Angels. She sees creating a feeling of homeliness as a very important part of the Beaufort philosophy. She

emphasised that it will always be a second home which will never supplant the home of the parents.

"We would hope that it is a second home where they receive love, kindness and understanding because they certainly generate that to others," she said. "It's really a success story because God is love in action and these people bring the same love into action in their daily lives."

"They have no hidden agenda," she continued. "They are loved themselves and they bring out that love in others. They bring out gifts that people didn't know they had."

Today, St Mary of the Angels has 103 residents ranging in age from six years to the late 20s. In addition, St Francis Special School for moderately handicapped children caters for 77 pupils. A staff of 135 is employed.

Improvements in the standards of care and medical treatment have meant that the life span of children with mental handicaps has been greatly increased. While many of the children and young adults move onto other services and centres, St Mary of the Angels is a home for life for some of their friends.

St Mary of the Angels has always been a home with an open door. In this year of celebration, a special invitation is extended again to come and witness the miracle of love at Beaufort.

## Ring cycle

ON YOUR bike. There's no time like the present to firm up those calf muscles in preparation for the Ring of Kerry Cycle which will be held in aid of St Mary of the Angels on July 24.

The cycle sponsorship will go towards the renovation and upgrading of the Hydrotherapy Pool which is 18 years old. This is the 10th year that the cycle has been run for charity.

"We at St Mary of the Angels are very grateful for the kindness of Denis Geaney and his committee who have considered us this year," Home Administrator Sr Colm said.

"We hope that as many people as possible will take part in the cycle."

## Cover picture

Walking in the peaceful grounds of St Mary of the Angels with the MacGillicuddy Reeks in the background: Director of Care Sr Marie Kidney (right) and care staff member Bernie Moynihan with resident Joanne

Pic: Kevin Coleman

### 25th anniversary St Mary of the Angels Calendar of events

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>May 1</b>       | Mass of thanksgiving — Cathedral Killarney at 3pm.<br>Refreshments — GlenEagle Hotel at 4.30pm.<br>Display of photographs and history of home.                                      |
| <b>June</b>        | Garden Fete — June 6.<br>Zig and Zag. Open day, school, open day, home, open day, Listowel.   |
| <b>July/August</b> | Sponsored cycle Ring of Kerry, July 24<br>Holiday weekend for children who do not go home — use vacant chalets.<br>Staff barbecue.  |
| <b>September</b>   | AGM parents<br>Mass for parents who have had a bereavement.   |
| <b>October</b>     | Re-union social and presentation to staff — long service awards 25 years at St Mary of the Angels. 20/10/93.<br>Dr Buckley — talk to community nurses.<br>November/Special Olympics |
| <b>December</b>    | Special Mass — parents<br>Christmas party in the gym — especially for those who are unable to attend outside parties.<br>Launching of tape with poems about St Mary of the Angels.  |
| <b>1994</b>        |   |
| <b>January</b>     | Table quiz in the gym.  |
| <b>February</b>    | Biddies group to raise funds for St Mary of the Angels.   |
| <b>March</b>       | Special float from St Mary of the Angels to commemorate the 25th anniversary (17th March).  |
| <b>April</b>       | Closing Mass.   |

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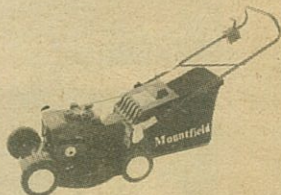
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**Mountfield**





Dr Dermot Clifford, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, recalls the arrival of the Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood at Beaufort and how they came to the inspired decision to create a home for special children on the Doyle farm rather than opt for a home for the elderly or for retired priests. Dr Clifford spent ten years there as a chaplain and returns to Killarney this week-end for the celebrations to mark the silver jubilee of St Mary of the Angels

# Following in the footsteps of St Francis

THE turning point in the life of St Francis of Assisi came in a little church outside the walls of his native town. As he prayed before the crucifix he heard a voice which said, "Francis, go and repair my house, which as you see is falling down". In his youthful enthusiasm he gathered some young followers and he did up the church and two others, including one in a little patch of ground called the Portiuncula. That church was dedicated to "St Mary of the Angels".

The spirit of St Francis, his love of the poor and his love of nature, has been spread by many religious orders of men and women down the centuries. A comparatively late arrival was the Order of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood whose mother house is in Laydwell, Surrey. Their coming to Kerry was providential.

On a promotions tour of the diocese in the early 1960s they met Mary Rose Doyle in Drishane Convent School. She was an only child and her parents had a fine farm beneath the majestic Macgillycuddy Reeks. She left father and mother and land for the sake of the Kingdom and went as a novice to Ladywell.

When Denis and Mary Doyle began "to go into years" as they say, two of the sisters came and looked after them. They took in a few other elderly people, also, into the large farmhouse. In 1965/66 Mary and Denis died — within one year to the very day of each other. They left the farm to the Order.

The Sisters, true to the spirit of St Francis, consulted the Bishop of Kerry, Dr Denis Moynihan, as to what charitable work might be set up in Beaufort. He gave them three suggestions. The first was a home for old people. They were already running one on a small scale. His second suggestion was a home for sick priests. At that time, the nearest one

was in Clonakilty and the priests were lonely there as their families and friends could not come regularly to see them.

Bishop Moynihan said that he included the last suggestion as he felt that his own age — he was eighty then — had over-influenced his thinking towards services for the elderly.

Both he and the sisters then consulted Fr Pat Sayers, the Parish Priest of Beaufort and he strongly favoured a children's home. Fr Sayers' support swung the decision in the children's favour although the Sisters were not involved in the care of the handicapped, either in England or in Ireland — their main work was in general hospitals as in the Portiuncula, Ballinasloe, founded just fifty years ago.

But they had a sister in Bulawayo who was running a mission home for special children. St Fatima was recalled and went to work on the Beaufort project.

Soon "Mother Fatima" was a household name in Kerry. She went from parish to parish, visiting the priests and gathering little groups of parents together. She was a woman with a mission. First, she had to convince the people of Kerry that there was a real need for a home. Fr John B Daly came as Parish Priest to Beaufort and he and the late Fr Austin O'Callaghan were chaplains to the Sisters. They also organised fund-raising activities in the parish and soon the Sisters were an integral part of the Beaufort community.

On August 13, 1967, St Mary of the Angels was officially blessed and opened by Bishop Moynihan. The Doyles soon had a hundred spiritual grandchildren and as many workers on their land! A school was to come in due course and bus loads of children from all over South Kerry began to arrive each morning. Other services grew and continue to do so as knowledge and expertise developed.

It was in 1976 that Sister Aquinas, the successor of St Fatima came to see me on school business. Before she left she asked me if I had ever thought of living out in the country.



Bishop Denis Moynihan turning the first sod, in 1966, on the site at Beaufort where St Mary of the Angels was to rise. On the left of the picture is Mother Fatima, who was brought home from Bulawayo to get the project off the ground

“  
Kerry has reason to be grateful to the Doyle family and to the Franciscan Sisters. Kerry is proud of them  
Archbishop Clifford

They had, she said, a room near the chapel which was originally meant for a chaplain. A few days later I went out to see the place. It was supper time on a sunny evening and there was no one about. I saw the room and it was tiny. No space for a desk or books! I decided that it would not do. I went into the sunlit chapel to say a prayer before departing to write a note of regret. A breviary sat on the seat in front of me and I thought I might as well read Evening Prayer. When I came to the Scripture Reading, I found, "Foxes have dens, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

That stopped me in my tracks! I took

another look at the room and said, "The Son of Man had no books or desk either". Even though Francis was only my middle name, I felt I was under orders as I knelt in another chapel of "St Mary of the Angels".

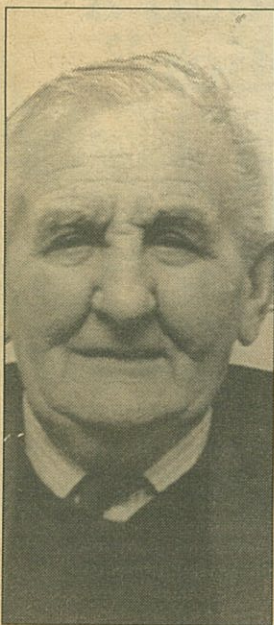
I was privileged to live among the children, the staff, the sisters, the parents and friends of St Mary of the Angels for almost ten years. I learned a great deal there and I was very sad indeed when I had to leave. I appreciated how Mary Rose Doyle must have felt when she left home as a teenager. I also appreciated how her parents must have felt as they gave her their blessing. Their strong faith helped to see the hand of providence at work. Their daughter had to go and they had to "let go".

An earthly family was to give way to a spiritual one. They were to be blessed with numerous spiritual children and grandchildren. "In truth I tell you, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times as much... now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life".

Kerry has reason to be grateful to the Doyle family and to the Franciscan Sisters. Kerry is proud of them.

## Milestones 1968-'93

- 1968—1993
- 1968 Residential Home opened for 60 children.
- 1969 Special Unit for 16 children opened.
- 1970 Recognition by the Department of Education for St Francis Special School.
- 1975 Gymnasium, Therapy / Swimming Pool opened.
- Four Staff Chalets.
- 1981 Three chalets for 30 young children officially opened.
- 1986 St Francis Special School moved to ultra modern new school on the campus.
- 1987 St Francis Education and Development Centre, Listowel, opened for children and young adults.
- 1988 Activation Centre opened at St Mary of the Angels, with emphasis on Social Training, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physical Education, Crafts and Swimming.
- 1989 One Chalet for children, who are five-day boarding.
- 1990 "Woodview" Day Unit.
- 1991 New Lift (Phase 1 Development).
- 1992 "Reeks Lodge" — Home Support Scheme commenced.
- Re-Structuring St Fidelis Unit for Adults (Phase 2).
- 1993 Last Nurses Chalet vacated — to be used for children.



Denis Doyle... he and his wife gave their farm at Whitefield to the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Motherhood

A SAD event took place at the Doyle home in Whitefield in 1965 when Mrs Mary Doyle died after a very short illness. Exactly one year to the day later, Denis Doyle followed her to her eternal reward. Their only child, Mary Rose, a tall good looking, dignified, athletic young girl—everything a young man from Kerry could wish for—had made the decision to join a congregation of Franciscan sisters.

Before Mary Doyle died she had a tremendous desire to give the entire property at Whitefield to the Religious Order Mary Rose had entered; her husband Dennis agreed with her. These two good people had no idea of what this would lead to. The Lord had his own plans.

In 1965 I was transferred from Africa (where I had been caring for mentally handicapped children) to Whitefield. Here, along with various sisters on leave, nights off, holidays and so on, we took up residence. Denis Doyle

suddenly found himself in a situation, where instead of being cared for by a dear and loving wife, he was living in the foundation of what was to become a convent. A lot of prayer and indecision followed.

What was to happen to this new found property? The Bishop of Kerry, Dr Denis Moynihan, had many needs in mind, a place for retired priests, a home for elderly people, or a home for mentally handicapped children? Many visits were made to the Bishop and we soon became good friends. He found it hard to make a decision, but it seemed that his priority was with the handicapped or intellectually impaired young people.

At this time a Corkwoman, Mother Evangelist was my inspiration and guide. She had been sent from our Motherhouse to help in decision making. In spite of ill health, indeed she was suffering from terminal cancer at the time, she proved to be a woman of great vision. She

cheerfully travelled with me around Ireland seeking advice, learning, looking and getting the feel of how others in the field of nursing the aged, training and caring for the handicapped were advancing.

Our parish priest, Canon Sears and our curate, Fr Austin O'Callaghan became dear friends and advisors also. Our prayers were answered when finally Mother Evangelist had something like a 'message from heaven' that we were to build for the handicapped. It was only afterwards that she suddenly remarked to me, "Where on earth are we going to get the money?" She brainwashed me into believing that this would be no problem provided I got on with the people of Kerry (no doubt—the intuition of a Corkwoman!). In fact I made many good friends who were hard workers, interested and above all

compassionate people.

For about a year, three of us, Dr Norrie Buckley, Sean Coyne and myself travelled to every corner of Kerry to form Parents and Friends Associations. We were later joined by John Leen. Sr Antonia Traynor, an inveterate worker in the field of handicap, joined us, having been transferred from Africa. Sr Teresa Leahy, on leave from there, also became a travelling companion to every shop, big and small from Ballyferriter to Ballybunion, even to the remotest of areas.

No stone was left unturned. The placing and collecting of tins was a great way of sharing what we were attempting to do. We also met each parish priest and asked for Sunday collections once a year.

A trip was made to America and the people of New York, Chicago and Boston responded

generously. We found that things were coming together, a site was picked by Canon Sears and a day was set for the cutting of the first sod.

This was a day never to be forgotten. The bulldozers had been in and when the heavens opened, mud and more mud was the order of the day. Many cars got stuck and the prophets of doom predicted that building such a long way out of town was madness. Those with faith, hope and courage continued undaunted.

Within the space of one and a half years, St Mary of the Angels, as we know it today was in existence. The main building, chapel, sister's bedrooms, swimming pool, gymnasium along with the first two chalets were built. Our first residents were soon followed by many more until the place was full to capacity. The garden (very much as it is today) was developed and Our Lady's grotto found its place. The great

MacGillycuddy Reeks looked down on another "little bit of heaven."

When I left Kerry in 1974, not one penny debt remained. This was due to the generosity of the people of Kerry both at home and abroad.

One letter from America is worth recalling 25 years later. It came from an old lady who had read The Kerryman weekly since she left as a child. It contained 'O. It read: "Dear Mother Fatima: Here, go and buy yourself a drink, you need it badly after all that work..."

I am indeed happy to have been a part of the beginnings at Beaufort.

• Sr Cora Veale (Mother Fatima) now works at Fatima Mission, Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe. In the first three weeks of March of this year, during a malarial epidemic, she treated over 700 patients, without the aid of a clinic

## From Ballyferriter to Ballybunion

By Sr Cora Veale

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# 25 years later



The play therapy room at St Mary of the Angels where Daniel and Irene are encouraged by Mary Kelliher, Catherine Reen and Marie O'Connor to develop a sense of fun and relaxation, which helps to develop their personalities.



Speech therapist Russ Browne working on a one-to-one basis with Martin to help him develop language skills and co-ordination.



Nurse Geraldine Looney supervises Alan and Vincent in the therapy pool. The pool, which has been part of the Beaufort complex since early on, is vital to the rehabilitative process as well as providing a place for relaxation.

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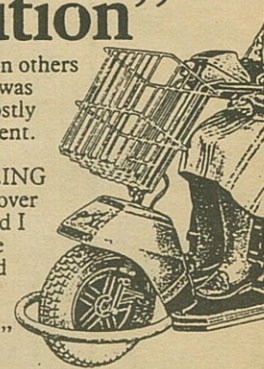
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The complex at Beaufort now includes a special national school where children follow the ordinary primary school curriculum. The school has nine teachers including Mary Clifford Nolan, who is seen here with pupils in the mainstream class.



### Getting ready for the fete

St. Claire's Hostel house parent Brigid O'Connor helps Patrick, Fiona and Donal as they put together a model for the fete which will be held at St Mary of the Angels on June 6. The hostel is for young adults who will move on to the care of another service like that provided at the Old Monastery in Killarney by the Kerry Parents and Friends of the Mentally Handicapped



Cecilie Kelliher, the social worker at St Mary of the Angels, sets out on her journey to meet with families who have handicapped children in Beaufort. Her job of liaising helps families to cope with children when they go home on visits

Pics: Kevin Coleman

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# Doyles would be proud of Beaufort now

IT is difficult to realise that it is 28 years since the Sisters moved into my family home farm.

Many of you will know more than me of my parents, Denis Doyle and May O'Meara of Drounathig, Killarney. My father was the second eldest of the family and the farm was left to him. He loved the land and was always so happy when out working horses, leaving the farmyard work, like milking, to the women of the family. I was privileged to have been born to parents who tried many times to have a child. They were very loving parents and we were very much a

family who prayed together, not only the three of us, but also all who worked and lived in the house.

The daily rosary was a priority straight after supper, even on Sunday evening when many were in a hurry to the dance. Also night prayers on the way to bed went on and on! All were prayed for by name, and if there was no response from either my father or I, my mother would repeat the invocation.

It was always a home where all were welcome, and we had many callers who were always treated to tea. My memories are of apple or rhubarb

By Sr Mary Rose

tarts and homemade bread. They both served wherever there was a need. If someone was wanting, he was given a job and joined us all around the dinner table and so with the tea taken out to the field during the harvest time.

I often wondered if my father wished he had a boy. But, I think that I was a good second being a "tom-boy", but did not always get away with it as Mum also held me to

my share of the household jobs.

My father was not very at home driving a car. I well remember him learning and sitting in the back taking it all in, and then I used to give advice from the back seat! He allowed me to drive the tractor as soon as I could reach the pedal and I am sure many of the men wished I was not about as I loved driving fast when drawing the hay in and would hoot if the previous cock of hay was not out of my way.

When I felt the call to religious life, I asked a very close friend to break the news to them. It was very hard, but

they both supported me all along the way. There was to be no blockage to God's call.

I am sure they are both very proud today, as I am, of the wonderful work that has been achieved over the years by the sisters, parents, and friends and all the staff and children of St Mary of the Angels.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have been involved along the years and ask God's blessing on Beaufort in the years ahead.

## Defying the white elephant prophet

MY OUTSTANDING memory of 25 years association with St Mary of the Angels is the opening day when a professional said to me: "You are now witnessing the opening of the greatest white elephant Kerry has ever seen."

Then the children arrived and my first reaction was that

By Norrie Buckley

there was great need for dental care for nearly every admission. Mother Fatima said: "we have no money". I proudly responded: "We have free dental care for all our children in Ireland".

To my horror our children in Beaufort did not qualify. Some official said that dental care was available only to school going children. Many battles later the Department of Health gave us equipment for a dental room. Dr Dermot Ivo O'Sullivan, assisted by his wife Kay and Dr Kathleen O'Donoghue (giving the occasional anaesthetic), performed a major miracle. The positive effect of the general health of children almost made me redundant.

The second greatest immediate need was physiotherapy. Sister Christine (now better known as Claire Edwards) arrived from Belfast to fulfil this need. The aim was to get everyone to sit nicely, to stand and to walk. This programme demanded dedication and involvement of all members of the staff under the direction of the various physios — I'm very proud of all the staff who have been involved in this programme. The ultimate (walking) was achieved in the most unlikely cases and sitting up nicely was achieved 100pc.

Early years were very busy—the Department of Health did not recognise the existence of St Mary of the Angels for quite some time. This meant no money.

My memory is of the Sisters spending every moment they were not working directly with the children on such money-making project as selling eggs, chickens, strawberries and supporting whist drives run in the home.

The people of the parish of Beaufort were a great help at



Dr Norrie Buckley.... has learned a lot from children, mothers and fathers at Beaufort

**The Department of Health did not recognise the existence of St Mary of the Angels for some years**

all times. It was at their whist drives that for the first time I saw what I had read was happening in France. A worker priest, Father Austin O'Callaghan (ar dheis Dé go bhfuil a anam dílis), always swept the floor after the whist drives.

Mother Fatima also gave lessons in copper craftwork and some of her pupils are still coppercrafting around the county.

Eventually came recognition by the Department of Health and the setting up of the Kerry Parents and Friends in '73-'74 and the support from the people of Kerry relieved the Sisters of a huge burden.

Now, all the teeth were good and children were either sitting nicely or walking. Gradually the handicapped themselves taught me something I had never learned from any professor.

Their fundamental needs are the same as for everyone else.

They need to love someone and be loved in return.

This two-way caring is an essential foundation stone to the formation of a stable personality and as grass needs water and warmth to grow, this need has to be tended to on a regular basis.

I have seen what must be the nearest thing to the transfiguration on the faces of my "educators" on the arrival of their beloved family members, who for many reasons—ill-health, bereavements, being busy, etc.—had not been able to visit for some time.

The second fundamental need is to feel useful or put another way, to be important.

I have seen this need fulfilled in very simple ways i.e. greeting a person by their name, shaking their hand, encouraging them when they can achieve the important social grace of being able to feed themselves or put a foot on the ground to propel a wheelchair.

I have learned a lot from the mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters of my friends in St Mary of the Angels. Coping with the unexpected arrival or recognition of their child's handicap is a long hard road for them. But I hope that never again will they have the feeling there is nothing we can do for them, nowhere to go.

I ask forgiveness for those professionals who told parents down the years that their children would never know them. This, in my experience, is the big lie and a very big wound to inflict on parents.

I hear so many times from people asking me what can they do to help. It is very simply: a child has arrived, send a card, call in, bring the present, give a hand, give the baby a cuddle, tell a funny story and give mother a break.

Remember also the brothers and sisters and get your children who are their age-group to do the calling in.

A big thank you to all the staff who have worked in St Mary of the Angels during the past 25 years, their dedication to all on and off duty has been very edifying.

● Dr Norrie Buckley has been physician to St Mary of the Angels for 25 years.



The community of Franciscan Sisters at Beaufort to-day. Front: Sr Maura Birmingham, Sr Colm, administrator, Sr Philip Kelly. Back: Sr Maria Kett, Sr Catherine Murtagh, Sr Marie Kidney, director of care, and Sr Patrick Harte

## Derek's second home for the last 19 years

WE ARE a family who have a retarded young man of 23 in the Home at Beaufort for the past nineteen years. What does it mean to us? For the first four years of Derek's life we travelled

By the Bambury family

many roads in our quest for help. At the end of the day all we found were blind alleys and disappointment.

Our journeying took us all the way to a Clinic in Philadelphia, USA, but this proved to be the biggest disappointment of all.

Then one day a friend told us about the Home at Beaufort. At this stage it had become very clear to us that we could not manage Derek at home. He needed round-the-clock care, and even though he was loved very much by all the family it was not humanely possible to carry on. So we went to St Mary of the Angels to find out for ourselves what the place was like.

Mother Fatima was the superior at the time. She made us most welcome. We found her to be a very sympathetic, understanding person, and she completely allayed our fears about leaving Derek in care.

St Mary of the Angels has been his second home now for the best part of twenty years. He is quite happy there. Of that we are sure. But he also likes to come home to us for his holidays at Christmas, Easter and Summer.

The Sisters have always been at pains to point out to us how important it is for

Derek to keep in close touch with his family.

There are six more children in our family, all older than Derek, three in this country and three in London. Each and everyone of them will make sure to visit him both when he comes home on holidays and at his second home at Beaufort, and are always willing to lend a helping hand while he is at home.

As a family we will always have the highest admiration and praise for the Sisters and staff at St Mary of the Angels. You could say they are the God given answer to a tragedy in our family. Not alone that but also the hundreds of other families all over Kerry.

Kerry has been lucky to have such a band of dedicated people within its boundaries. As I have said before we have been dealing with the Sisters and staff for the last twenty years and we cannot speak too highly of them.

The Home itself has undergone major restructuring and expansion over the last couple of years. This work has been carried out for the sole purpose of making the lives of the hundred or more people who live permanently at the home a little more pleasant and comfortable. There is much more to be done.

The cutbacks at the Department of Health have affected the people at St Marys like everybody else.

In all fairness to Dick Spring, our Tanaiste, he has promised money for the Mentally Handicapped of this country. We sincerely hope he will keep that promise.

Now as we approach the evening of our lives, should we be called away before Derek, we have been reassured by the good Sisters at St Mary of the Angels that Derek will always have a home with them. This is a great consolation to us.

● The Bambury family live at Inch, Listowel.

## A great couple

DENIS and Mary Doyle would certainly be happy and proud today to witness the wonderful developments which have taken place at Whitefield over the past twenty-five years. If they had

By Donald O'Meara

a wish or a dream during their lives, the love and care provided at St Mary's has fulfilled what would have been dear to their hearts.

Denis and Mary were an exceptional couple and the touched the lives of many people in a unique way. Those who visited their home will always remember the warmth of the welcome extended.

One sensed an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and hospitality which made a lasting impression on every visitor. They were simple and unsophisticated with a sincere and practical Christian philosophy. Was it any wonder that the foundation for Mary Rose's religious vocation was created there?

Many will look back with genuine nostalgia on life in Whitefield in former days. There was always excitement, fun and laughter. As a farm Denis was ahead of his time. He had a very progressive outlook and you could be assured that the most modern ideas were put into practice. In the days before rural electrification the wind charger stood out in the skyline and the white pony and green trap became redundant well before their time.

Mary kept a model home and was particularly renowned for her cooking. She literally could put her hand to anything and every room bore testimony to her creative and artistic talents.

Many neighbours will recall the willingness of both Mary and Denis to help out in time of need. They took an active part in community life and it was the Doyle's Tractor which transported the wooden cross half-way up the slopes of Carrantuohill.

All their nieces and nephews will remember Uncle Denis and Aunt Mary with deep affection and admiration. They influenced their lives in a special way and holidays spent at Whitefield will never be forgotten.

St Mary of the Angels will ever stand as an appropriate monument to these wonderful people.

Ni bheidh a leitheidi ann arís.  
● Donald O'Meara is a nephew of the late Mrs Doyle.



# The services at Beaufort

ST MARY of the Angels provides residential, day care and community-based services and special education for children and adults who have a wide range of disabilities and special needs. Chalet accommodation and the residential unit within St Mary's promote a homely and stimulating environment.

The services provided by St Mary of the Angels seek to address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the person,

within the philosophy and ethos of the congregation through:

- Protecting the rights of people with a mental handicap.
- Ensuring the best quality of life available.
- Promoting the dignity of people with a mental handicap.
- Upholding the Christian principle of the sacredness of life.

A full range of residential services are provided at St Mary of the Angels for over 100 people.

The availability of respite care/crisis intervention forms an

integral part of the residential programme. This provides an essential and at times crucial support to families in the community.

A day programme is also located at St Mary of the Angels—this is a support service for school-going day pupils with special needs. In more recent times they have developed a family support project which involves weekend breaks.

The support services include:

- Psychological Service.
- Social Work Service.
- Physiotherapy Service.

- Hydrotherapy Service.
- Play therapy.
- Speech therapy.
- General Health Care/Medical/Para-Medical.

They run three activity centres on the Complex which provide: programmes for social activities, daily living skills, aromatherapy/art/music and relaxation to mention just a few.

Committed and skilled staff adapt a multi-disciplinary team approach towards meeting the needs of each individual.

## Activities in Listowel

IMAGINE a room where bubbles of coloured light are reflected in silver domes, perfumed scents drift on the air and relaxing music eases the little child on the cushion into a peaceful lull.

This a sensory stimulation room or Snoezelen which will be in place at St Francis's Day Care Centre in Listowel by June. The £8,000 needed to buy the hi-tech facility was raised by Listowel Fire Service.

Snoezelen is pronounced snooze-a-lun and is derived from two Dutch words meaning sniffling and dozing. It gives pupils with profound handicaps their first chance to experience sensations taken for granted by most people.

It can also have a calming influence on children who have profound learning difficulties and serious physical handicaps.

The introduction of the Snoezelen is part of the centre's policy of ever striving for betterment of services. There are also plans for a hostel and activity day centre for adults over the age of 18.

The centre opened on June 2, 1987 and caters for children aged between six and 18. These are children with difficulties in learning. Many of them have physical disabilities. Eleven children currently attend the Centre five days a week from 9am to 5pm.

The staff includes Una Stack, Kilmorna, Listowel, Geraldine Sheehy, Tralee, Mary Dreelan, Ballymacelligott, Louise Cremin, Kanturk and Jackie Sugrue, Listowel. The centre's bus driver is David Farnsworth.

A full programme of daily activities is designed to enhance the quality of each child's life, to help each child develop its full potential. It is a multi-disciplinary approach combining the expertise of the psychologist, social worker, physiotherapist and speech therapist.

The centre is equipped with specialist equipment including computers, ball pool and trampoline. The children use the Hydrotherapy Pool at St Mary of the Angels every Thursday.

In addition to providing physiotherapy for its own children, the centre also makes this service available to other children in the community.

Contact between the centre and parents is a big priority. To support the parents, children are taken to St Mary of the Angels for occasional weekend breaks. Information sessions are also arranged for parents with experts like dentists and dieticians.

"The St Francis Centre is a community-based centre," Anne Stack said. "It is now very much part of the community of Listowel. We receive every support and goodwill from our neighbours and friends here. This helps to make it possible to continue the work."

"It is an ever-progressing service which changes constantly to meet the needs of the people availing of it," she said.



A child with learning difficulties is helped at the St Francis day care centre in Listowel



Mrs Helen Quilligan helping daughter Nora in class at Beaufort. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the education process

## Day Centre

TO SEE a child lift a spoon of food for the first time or utter a new word are among the milestones usually witnessed by mothers or fathers in their own homes.

For Ann Stack and the team of care workers at Woodview Day Centre in Beaufort, these signs of progress are the dividends reached after long and patient hours of teaching children with special needs.

"It's a big lift," Ann said. "There's a great sense of achievement when you toilet train a child or when they pick up a spoon and use it to eat their dinner for the first time. When they start getting more words, it's nice to see their language improving."

A native of County Monaghan, Ann met her Kerry-born husband, Michael, while she was nursing in England. She lives in Killorglin and has worked at St Mary of the Angels for the past eight years.

The rest of the Woodview team consists of Sinéad Dowd, Castlemaine and FAS worker Anne Daly, Currow who is currently standing in for Sr

Catherine who is on sick leave.

The centre, which is based in a former nurses' chalet in the grounds of St Mary of the Angels, lays the foundations on which subsequent school work is based.

At a very basic level, children are toilet trained and taught to feed themselves. They become accustomed to relating to each other in groups. Their social and communication skills are developed.

Some of the children attend St Francis Special School — a stone's throw from the centre — a few hours each day to gradually introduce them to the school experience.

Play therapy is one of the main keys for opening up the world of learning to children at Woodview. Music, action songs and percussion sessions, reflexology, swimming and computers are all part of the teaching process.

An individual programme is worked out by the physiotherapist, the speech therapist and the care workers to cater for each child's specific needs.

## Cecilia's counselling role

IN THE early, bewildering days when parents are coming to terms with the fact that their little son or daughter has been born with learning difficulties, their first contact with Beaufort's special services comes in the person of Cecilia Kelliher.

Cecilia, who lives in Castlemaine with her husband and four children, has been a social worker with St Mary of the Angels since 1981. Her role is to counsel, to provide information and to give parents all the back-up and support she possibly can.

She sees parents through the

tough days when they ask, 'Why us?' to the next stage when they strive to find out what they can do for their child.

Above all else, Cecilia presents the service as essentially parent-orientated. One aspect of the care available at St Mary of the Angels is the child care facility which enables parents to take a break.

For instance, a couple can leave their child overnight at the home if they need to take a break. This is especially relevant to parents

whose children need more care and attention as they grow older.

One area which Cecilia would like to see develop is the provision of recreational facilities in the family home. This could take the form of a play therapist visiting children at home during the holiday periods.

Her work takes the form of ongoing relationships with the parents to ensure that they get as much support as possible especially when they're caring for their children at home.

## Planning for the future

THE Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) contains a very clear commitment to the Mental Handicap Services.

Like the other Agencies which are part of the Federation in Kerry, we are very conscious that

By Sr Colm

there are still a number of people with mental handicap living at home with elderly parents, as well as families of children who have no service at all.

Part of this problem is being addressed by our respite care programme and home support scheme which is proving very beneficial.

There is a problem in Kerry concerning places for the adult mentally handicapped. This applies to all categories and in particular to the most severely and profoundly handicapped. Our graduates in the moderate to severe ranges can be catered for at home or in other services. However, there is no service that caters specifically for the most severely and profoundly handicapped, and that is why in 1988 we responded positively to the need for on-going facilities for this group of residents by altering the main building to cater for this group.

Phase 2 of this project will take place as soon as adequate resources are made available to us for this purpose from the Government.

Our future programme contained in the 7-Year-Plan, together with the programmes of



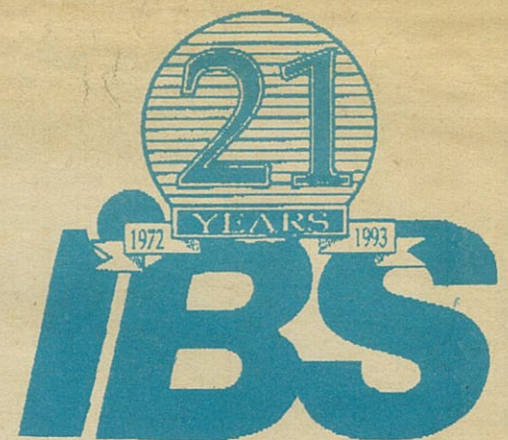
Sr Colm... looking forward to the future

other agencies, is currently under consideration by the Department of Health and the Southern Health Board.

The plan as it affects St Mary of the Angels calls for the following:

- A Renovations to the Main Building to cater for a specific group of young adults.
- B Funding for Woodview Unit (Day Service) for children at St Mary of the Angels.
- C Group Home in Listowel for children.
- D Group Home in Tralee for children.
- E Training and Education Centre in Tralee for children.
- F Activation Unit — Beaufort for children.
- G Expansion of Home Support Scheme.

• Sr Colm is administrator at St Mary of the Angels



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