

Special 21 celebration

□ TO celebrate 50 years of the Augustinian Church in O'Connell Street, the Limerick Federation of Women's Organisations are hosting a celebration of music and flowers on Monday December 21.

Joining the federation in this celebration are the Friends of the Augustinians, the Choral Union under the direction of Harry Howse, the Limerick Singers, flower clubs and local solo artists.

Colette Davis will be accompanying all our singers on the piano kindly donated for the night by Karl Kleiser Pianos.

The guest singers will include Jean Homes, Helen Houlihan, and Pearl Kiely.

The recital will commence at 8pm.

The flower display will be open to the public on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday December 19, 20 and 21.

There will be a celebrated Mass on Friday December 18, at 8pm to launch the golden year weekend.

The celebration will be an opportunity for people to show their appreciation to the Augustinian order who have given tirelessly of themselves over the past half century.

As the Augustinian priory is in need of renovation, the Limerick Federation decided that this would be an opportune time to make a contribution to the order towards this refurbishing.

Therefore there will be a charge of £5 per adult and £2 for OAP and students.

Admission is by ticket only.

Tickets are available from members of the Federation, Friends of the Augustinians, O'Sullivan's shoes and from the priory office.

In the reign of King Henry 8 the Augustinians were among those caught up in the dissolution of the monasteries and the Limerick priory, with all its lands, lordships, and chapels was granted to Edmund Sexton and his heirs who were the Earls of Limerick.

Despite this loss of their monastery and lands and although they were occasionally forced to flee from persecution over the next two hundred years the Augustinians maintained a presence in the city.

In 1778 the hermits of St Augustine opened a church and house in Creagh Lane.

This church has the distinction of being the first in the city to have an organ, but it was too small to deal with the numbers of people who came to Mass there.

In 1823, the Augustinians moved to George's Street, now O'Connell Street having purchased a bankrupt theatre the year before.

The theatre had been built in 1810 at a cost of £4,000 but the Augustinians acquired it at the knock down price of £400 and spent a further £600 converting it for use as a monastery and church.

The friars clearly lacked some confidence as to their welcome into the city because they left the facade of their new building relatively unchanged, the church being approached through an arch at the front.

It was not until the present church was being constructed in the 1940's that it