



At the Dominican Press conference at the Priory in Limerick this week (from left): Mr. Michael Madden, finance officer, Mid-Western Health Board; Miss Breda Murphy, V.E.C.; Rev. C. B. Lavery, O.P., Prior; Senator G. E. Russell, Mayor; Rev. B. Browne, O.P.; Mr. T. P. Mac Diarmada, city manager; Miss Babs Shanahan, Limerick Corporation, and Lt. Col. J. Phelan (P.R.O.), I.C.M.S.A.

Picture: JOHN F. WRIGHT.

Dominicans 750 years in Limerick

BY LEADER REPORTER
LEADERS OF Church
 and State, headed by President Hillery, An Taoiseach, Mr. Cosgrave, and the Apostolic Nuncio, will be in Limerick shortly to participate in various functions to mark the 750th anniversary of the coming of the Dominican Order to Limerick.

The celebrations will start on Saturday, May 7th, and will continue until Sunday, May 15th.

President Hillery and Mr. Cosgrave will be the special guests on Friday, May 13th, the Feast of Our Lady of Limerick

Provincial,

That evening, at 7.30, a special Mass will be celebrated at the Dominican Church at which the principal concelebrant will be Very Rev. Fr. Flannan Hynes, O.P., the Irish Provincial of the Order.

Later that night there will be a dinner dance in the Glentworth Hotel.

This week, the prior at St. Saviour's, Very Rev. Fr. C. B. Lavery, outlined the plans for the 750th anniversary celebrations and briefly traced the history of the order in the city.

Fr. Lavery said that to have existed 750 years through troubled times was, in itself, an achievement. And he went on to state that while in the present year we had vandalism, violence, institutional and physical unrest, this was nothing really new.

Identity

In many respects it could be stated that there was a crisis of identity in Church and State right now but, he stressed, every problem facing Limerick, and Ireland, today had been faced before and had been surmounted.

Referring to the fact that the Dominicans came to Limerick in the 13th century, Fr. Lavery said that the order immediately became involved with the people. "Violence, racial problems, linguistic difficulties and difference of religion were the problems of the day," he said.

In the past those problems had been solved by "acknowledging a vital link between the cultural and religious outlook of the people" and the Dominican Order had survi-

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ved "by service and availability to the people" and by "sound preaching in Church."

Early days

Fr. Lavery went on to speak of the Dominicans' role in the early days and how the order had survived through the violence of the Norman-Irish struggles and "indeed the Irish-Irish struggles of the 13th-15th centuries," and also through the two terrible sieges of 1651 and 1691 as well as the penal days and the fight for independence.

Reflecting again on the past, Rev. Fr. Lavery said: "In a time when fishing is so much in the news I would like to remind you that in the Norman times the members of the Dominican Order caught fish in the lax weir and supplied the religious houses and nobility with fish."

Having referred to some of the outstanding Dominicans of the past, Fr. Lavery said that one of the most famous Dominicans associated with St. Saviour's was Terence Albert O'Brien, one of the O'Briens of Thomond

Twice prior

"He was twice prior, then at a chapter in the Black Abbey in Kilkenny, was elected provincial. Afterwards he became assistant general in Rome and on Monday, March 11th, 1647, the Pope appointed him Bishop of Emly," he said.

Fr. Lavery recalled that during Ireton's siege of 1651 Bishop Terence, in spite of threats and bribes, remained in the city consoling and en-



President Hillery: Limerick engagement.

couraging the citizens. He was subsequently martyred and his head placed on a pike on the present Baal's Bridge.

In 1951, the tercentenary of the siege was observed, and the then Mayor, Ald. Steve Coughlan, dedicated a public park in honour of Terence Albert O'Brien and one of the most venerated objects in the possession of the present community was Bishop O'Brien's pectoral cross.

Fr. Lavery said that a number of processions were associated with the Dominicans. The first was in 1816 when the order moved from Fish Lane to Glentworth Street.

Statue

On that occasion the people of the city marched in solemn procession, carrying the statue of Our Lady of Limerick.

Then, on June 9th, 1918, the statue was again carried through the streets on Limerick Women's Day when the womenfolk took to the streets to protest against conscription.

"Thus," said Fr. Lavery, "women's lib is nothing new."

Now a third major procession is to be held when, on Sunday, May 8th, thousands are expected to throng the streets when a procession will go to the original site in the grounds of St. Mary's Convent, Bishop Street.

This will be one of the many events to be held during the anniversary celebrations; the full programme for which will be made available on Monday next.

The present priory at Glentworth Street was built in 1943 when Rev. Fr. Leo McArdle

was prior. His brother, Fr. Isodore, is a member of the present community.

Milestone

Another interesting milestone for the order was on May 25th, 1972, when the high altar, which had been reconstructed in accordance with liturgical requirements, was consecrated by the late Bishop Henry Murphy.

But, probably, one of the most memorable occasions for the Dominican Order was on September 1st, 1973, when St. Saviour's became a parish. It was the first time that an order had been given a parish in the city.

To mark the memorable anniversary, a special souvenir booklet, "Dominicans in Limerick" has been produced, and in a preface, the Bishop of Limerick, Most Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Newman, concludes: "It is my prayer that the Dominican Fathers, both as religious and, as they now are also, parochial clergy, of our city, will continue into the future as they have been in the past... unshakable and reliable."

There is a most interesting article in the booklet by Rev. Myles Nolan, O.P., in the course of which he says the need for a university in Limerick was referred to as far back as 1644.

Mayor

Paying tribute to the outstanding work of the Dominican Order down through the years the Mayor, Senator Ted Russell, said that the 750th anniversary would be one of the highlights of his term of office.

"I am sure that the citizens will show their appreciation and affection for the Dominicans by fully participating in the many events planned to mark the anniversary," he said.

Mayor Russell added that the survival of the Dominicans down the years had been due to their involvement with the people "In modern parlance they worked with the brass-roots," he remarked.

The attendance at the Press conference also included Very Rev. Fr. Martin Browne, O.P., sub-prior, and members of the co-ordinating jubilee committee, Mr. T. P. Mac Diarmada, city manager; Miss Babs Shanahan, Miss Brid Murphy, Mr. John Phelan and Mr. Michael Madden. Other members of the committee include Mr. Joe Maguire, regional manager, Bank of Ireland; Mr. Michael Fagan, general manager, Glentworth Hotel, and Mr. Barry Kehoe, area manager, C.I.E.