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GENE

Redemptorist 'regret' marks centenary of Jewish pogrom

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CHAOIMH

THE rector of the Redemptorists has said he deeply regrets the role of his order in the Jewish pogrom of Limerick which happened 100 years ago this week.

Remembered amongst the Jewish community as a pogrom, the attacks were the results of an economic boycott of the Jews of Limerick lasting several months.

The boycott was sparked by a sermon given by Redemptorist Fr John Creagh where he told his congregation not to have any commercial dealings with the Jews.

Around 80 people left

Limerick as a result of the anti-Semitic outbreak.

Fr Seamus Enright, rector of the Redemptorists, said this Thursday: "As a community we regret what happened. I wonder if it makes sense to apologise. I am not sure apologising is the exact word I want to use. It should not have happened."

"Nowadays, we have made space here for Doras Luimní which shows how we respond very differently to new arrivals in the city."

Doras Luimní is Limerick's support group for refugees and asylum-seekers which is based in the Redemptorists.

Limerick writer Brendan O Cathaol's article in the Irishman's Diary in The Irish Times this Monday prompted a number of callers to the Limerick Leader to say he had been

too hard on Limerick.

However, Mr O Cathaol, who attended Sexton Street CBS and has close ties to the city said his main source of information for his article was a biography of Bishop Edward O'Dwyer by Dr Thomas Morrissey, "an outstanding educationalist."

"My sole interest was in recording the truth and telling it as it was," according to Mr O Cathaol.

Fr Enright said he was not familiar with the full story of the Jewish boycott, but that he and the order share the views of Fr Robert McNamara who at a special Mass last November to celebrate the order's 150-year history in the city admitted: "Sometimes we Redemptorists put a foot wrong and badly hurt our Jewish brothers

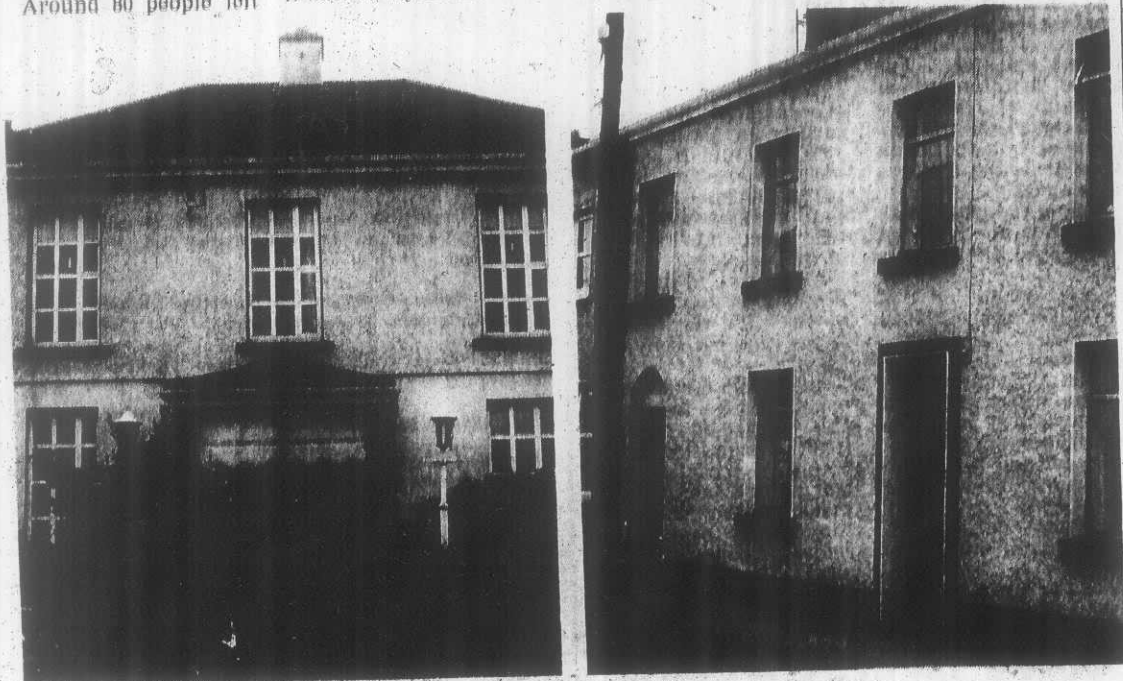
and sisters, for which we seek repentance."

This was the first time the order had acknowledged their part in the anti-Semitic outbreaks of 1904.

Fr Creagh, director of the Redemptorist Men's Confraternity during a sermon on January 11, 1904, lashed out against the business methods of hire purchase and money lending of the Jews of the city, accusing them of shedding Christian blood.

He went so far as to suggest that they would "kidnap and slay Christian children".

In a follow-up sermon on January 18, 1904, Fr Creagh instructed his congregation "not to deal with the Jews", which was interpreted as meaning not only to give up trading with them, but also to repudiate their debts.



The former Jewish synagogues on Wolf Tone Street