

● Those were the days... Geraldine looks back to the Limerick of her childhood

'The night I saw the 'Tans arrive at our door in Bishop Street'

GERALDINE O'Reilly's faith in God is simple and unshakeable. She comes from a genera-

tion of Limerick women whose lives revolved entirely around their families and to whom their religion was always precious.

"I never do anything," she told us, "without asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Nearly 80 years ago, when she was a little girl in Bishop Street she got first hand experience of the power of prayer. "I have never told this story before, but here it is," she said.

"It was during the Black and Tan war. There was a murder in the city and it was pinned on our road. I was only about three years old and I didn't know what the Black and Tans were. I remember visualising them as black on one side and yellow on the other.

"There were two maiden ladies living beside us, and I remember them coming to my father, very frightened, saying 'what are we going to do'. I was frightened too, until my father assured me that everything was going to be all right.

"I remember him going to Williams' in Patrick Street and buying two pictures of the Sacred Heart. He had them consecrated by a priest and he hung one on our door and one on the sisters' door. I remember him putting a big mattress up to our window, and everyone knelt down and said the Rosary. I crept upstairs and peeped out over the mattress he had put there. There was a lot of noise outside and people were screaming. I saw the lorry

coming down the street and a door beside us being broken down. I saw one of the soldiers at our door raising his hand, and then he just stood there, motionless for a few seconds with his arms outstretched. Then he moved away.

"I went downstairs and the Rosary was still echoing and I told them all 'The bad men aren't coming at all...'

One of Geraldine's favourite memories is of the feast of Corpus Christi in Limerick, when the Arch Confraternity car-

ried the Eucharist through the city. "The women would be up all night decorating

changed, she says. "That time you could travel from one end of the city to the other at any time of the day or night, without being touched."

"In my humble opinion mothers shouldn't have to go out to work when their children are very small. No-one on this earth can make up to a child what a mother can give him before the age of five."

She and her late husband, Bill, had five children - "five of the best children anyone could have." One of her sons, Fr Gerard is a priest working with

Aids victims in South Africa. The others are Willie, Dermot, Noel and daughter Miriam. She loves all of them dearly, and while they have all been extremely successful in life, she says 'there's no need to mention that'. Bill was a shipping agent, and a founder of the religion study group - the St Francis group. They obviously had a very happy marriage.

"When he died, I was devastated. But I said I can't make everyone miserable with my own grief. I have to go on."

She believes that people should be kinder to each other. "I've learned love, patience and suffering myself from visiting St Camillus regularly."

But she loves life too. She has been to South Africa twice in recent years, and gave a homily twice in two city churches. "They walked me into it," she said.

She plays Bridge three times a week and is still a great singer. She sang in choirs in the Franciscan, Augustinian and Dominican churches in Limerick, and won an award with the City ICA guild once.

She has been involved with people all her life, and she's very artistic. She also has had a life long interest in politics. "I come from a Fine Gael family, but now it has come to the stage where I don't know who to vote for."

She was never keen on Charlie Haughey, but ever kind and compassionate, she says "we'll say a Hail Mary for him too."



MEMORIES

their houses for the occasion. They wanted to have everything beautiful for Jesus." But Limerick has



● Geraldine with her late husband Bill and son, Fr Gerard, pictured some years ago at Rome's Trevi Fountain

DEPUTY EDDIE WADE
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Deputy Eddie Wade, M.C.C., will be available to meet with constituents on the following dates:

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10th -

Sheehan's Cross	Hunting Lodge	11.45 a.m.
Bruff	Dave Clarke's Bar	12.30 p.m.
Dola	John C. Ryan's Bar	2.15 p.m.
Pallasgreen	Larry Beary's Bar	3.00 p.m.
Boher	Pa Mcrath's Bar	3.45 p.m.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 12th -

Mulgrave Street	Jerry O'Dea's Bar	11.15 a.m.
Clare Street	A.I Bar	12 noon
O'Connell Street	County Council Office	12.30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17th -

Castleconnell	Guerin's Bar	1.30 p.m.
Murroe	Noel Foley's	2.15 p.m.
Cappamore	Community Centre	3.00 p.m.
Doon	Whelan's Bar	3.45 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24th -

Hospital	O'Neill's Bar	2.00 p.m.
Herbertstown	Arch Bar	2.45 p.m.
Inch St. Laurence	Mollie's Bar	3.30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 3rd -

Ballysimon	Morrison's Bar	12 noon
Drombanna	Four Elms Bar	12.45 p.m.
Ballyneety	Cat's Cradle Bar	2.00 p.m.
Caherconlish	Old Credit Union	2.45 p.m.

Full-time Constituency Office: Old Credit Union, Caherconlish. Open daily Monday to Friday. Tel. 061-352105. Fax 061-352106.

Leinster House: Tel. 01-6183252, Fax 01-6184556.

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VENUE: Corbrary Hall, Glin, Co. Limerick

DATE: Monday February 12th, 2001

TIME: 7.0 pm - 9.00 pm

VENUE: The Community Centre Doon, Co. Limerick

DATE: Tuesday, February 13th, 2001

TIME: 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm

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