



Dolen Mynyw Menevia News

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The Two Brothers' Jubilees

Two young Irish students, who had recently been ordained to the priesthood, came to Wales in the 1950's, and are this year celebrating Jubilees - and what an impression and contribution they have made to the Catholic Church in South Wales.

The Rt.Rev. Daniel Joseph Mullins, BA, Emeritus Bishop of our Diocese, is celebrating the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination as a Bishop. He was born at Kilfinane on 10th July 1933, ordained a priest

on 12th April 1953, ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Cardiff on 1st April 1970 and translated to be the first Bishop of the restructured Menevia Diocese on 12th February 1987. He retired as our bishop on 12th June 2001 on handing over to Bishop Mark Jabalé.

Bishop Mullins' elder brother, the Rev. Canon Edmund Mullins, had come to the Cardiff Diocese a few years earlier. He was born in 1924 and ordained priest on 28th May 1950 and will celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Ordination on 28th May.

A few days after the publication of this edition of Menevia News, there will take place, on Tuesday 27th April, a 'Joint Celebration Mass' at St Joseph's Cathedral, concelebrated by Bishop Thomas Matthew Burns and clergy of the diocese and of course Bishop Daniel and Canon Mullins.

We shall cover this celebration in our next edition - but meanwhile Menevia News asked both Jubilarians of their thoughts and memories of their time in South Wales.

These are published below...

Bishop Mullins recalled...

ALL BECAUSE OF A NUN

Planning for the future in the Archdiocese of Cardiff, Archbishop McGrath remembered that someone he had known as a teacher in Flint was now a 'Sister of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle', and was headmistress of the convent primary school in Kilfinane, in Ireland. He accordingly wrote to Sr. Bernadette to ask if she knew of any likely young men who might be considering the priesthood. Sr. Bernadette in her turn contacted the mother of one of her past pupils - and Mrs. Mullins thought of her two sons. Asked why he came to Wales, Bishop Daniel made this reply: "it was all because of a nun!"

In Ireland in those days, to have a secondary education, most boys had to

go to boarding school. That level of education was provided almost entirely by Religious Orders. Parents, including Mr. and Mrs. Mullins, made great sacrifices in very difficult times to give their sons a post primary education.

Bishop Mullins tells us that at that time, young men who wished to become diocesan priests in Ireland had to attend the diocesan junior seminary; this was a provision laid down by the Council of Trent. Secondary schools in Ireland all produced students who later became priests. Some joined Religious Orders; others went to dioceses outside Ireland. Bishop Mullins and his brother (Canon Edmund Mullins) were at school at Mount Melleray, a Cistercian monastery in County Waterford, and for them the foreign mission was to be Wales. Bishop

Mullins remarked that he had never really heard of the place before - the "island over there" was known to them as England, and was not exactly popular with the Irish. However, in responding to Archbishop McGrath's request, they discovered a new land.

Bishop Mullins remembers with gratitude that Archbishop McGrath later sent him to St. Mary's College in Aberystwyth to study. "He wanted the college filled up; there were only seventeen of us there, and that was full!" At Aberystwyth Bishop Mullins met an inspiring teacher whom he still regards as an important influence on him: Saunders Lewis, with whom he began to learn Welsh, which was then an essential part of the curriculum. After his ordination, Bishop Mullins was sent by Archbishop McGrath to continue his Welsh studies at University College, Cardiff; he

remains indebted to Archbishop McGrath and to the professor and staff of the Welsh department in Cardiff for their kindness, inspiration and unflinching help.

He remembers Saunders Lewis with great respect; later, when he was parish priest of Penarth, Mr and Mrs. Saunders Lewis were among his parishioners, and it was his privilege to provide pastoral care for them and for other elderly parishioners, bringing them the sacraments when they became house-bound. He officiated at both their funerals, even though by then he had left Penarth; it was the wish of their daughter that he should do them this last service, after having known them for so many years. Saunders Lewis would also be proud to know that his former pupil has himself become so much a part of the history of Catholic Wales.

and from Canon Edmund Mullins

My first impressions of Wales were of St. David's Cathedral in Cardiff, and my first parish, which was the docks area around Tiger Bay. I remember the parishioners as marvellous people; caring for each other and very quick to let me know if anyone was ill. I still have very clear memories of the days when I went round the parish on my bike, meeting many of the sailors and going to all the boxing matches!

The Cathedral itself was still in ruins after the war: when I saw it first in 1950, it was a burnt-out shell. The

roof had fallen in and trees and shrubs were growing in the sanctuary. The restored Cathedral was officially re-opened and consecrated in 1959: a joyous and happy occasion when my task was to organise and prepare the Altar Servers for the official ceremony. This took place in the presence of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster (Cardinal Godfrey), and the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop O'Hara. The chief celebrant was Cardiff's Archbishop Michael McGrath. Canon said that he remembers it as a spectacular occasion for a young priest.

He spoke of other highlights of his long service to the Church. From 1953 he worked in the Archdiocesan finance office until he became parish priest of Briton Ferry in 1963, where he had to prepare for the building of the present church. Later he became parish priest of St. Joseph's, Port Talbot. More recently he moved to Fishguard parish, where he still lives in retirement. In 1977 he was invited to membership of the 'Old Brotherhood of England and Wales', an institution which has existed since penal days to administer the affairs of the Church in these countries while Bishops could

not be appointed. It ceased to have an administrative function on the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, and now exists to meet socially twice a year and to administer some small funds which still survive.

Canon said one of his happiest memories was of his golfing days when, as a very successful member of the golfing clergy, he was part of a team of six priests who won the national competition: the prize was a free trip to Rome! Hearing his laughter as he remembered that time, you know he would like to be playing again.