

A decorative border in blue ink, consisting of a repeating geometric pattern of small squares and lines, framing the central text.

**What
is
AN RÉALT?**

By

REV. JOHN J. CONNOLLY, C.S.S.R., M.A.

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REV. JOHN J. CONNOLLY, C.S.S.R., M.A.

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What is An Réalt?

AN OLD MANUSCRIPT gives an account, in verse form, of some of the wise sayings of King Cormac Mac Airt. It is presented in the form of question and answer: 'What are the qualities of a good king?'; 'What are the three treasures of womanhood?' Each answer is prefaced by the same words—'Not hard to tell.' To ask 'What is An Réalt?' is a simple question. Very few, even with the wisdom of a Cormac Mac Airt, would be foolhardy enough to preface the answer with: 'Not hard to tell.' For an answer that is complete and adequate, that will convey to the hearers clear ideas about the ideals and aspirations of this organisation that has a star for its name, must necessarily include the explaining of many things. It will necessitate probing into backgrounds, setting things in their proper light and true perspective, so that we may view them as they really are, as an integral whole. And when I say that An Réalt is primarily concerned with the mind and the soul of Ireland, and with the souls of the Irish, you will appreciate how important it is to have some understanding of what this mind and spirit is, the quality that makes it distinctively what it is, as distinguished from all others.

To grasp, and assess at its true value, a spirit, is never an easy task. For though very real, it still remains ever intangible. It eludes capture, and will not submit to microscopic examination. No surgeon, however skilled, can subject it to his all-penetrating scalpel. And yet, it is none the less really there, pulsating and alive. We can only try to come to an understanding of it by an examination of externals, of actions and attitudes and characteristics which this spirit vivifies and then to come to a knowledge of the breath itself that gives them life. The spirit of a race is harder come by than that of an individual. Yet we must try to see what this spirit, this Irish mind, really is.

THE IRISH MIND

It may seem strange at first sight to speak of the 'Irish mind.' And yet, a people has as truly a mind as has any individual one of us, something that is quite distinctive, quite its own, marking it off from other peoples, just as the mind and attitude and outlook of each of us is different, in greater or lesser degree, from that of our neighbour. Education in its broadest sense is meant to form the mind of a child,

whether it be the formal education he receives in school, or the less formal though more important training he receives at home from his surroundings and environment, from experience. An effort is made to fill his yet-unfilled mind with images, ideas, associations, facts and knowledge, all of which will help to perfect him as a whole being, a composite of body and soul. His unformed mind is for all the world like an unfurnished house. We try to fit it out for him with stock that he can use and handle for the needs of his ordinary everyday life, for his intercourse with others, for his own happiness and well-being, spiritual and temporal. What he is taught helps him to make judgments, colours his way of looking at things and assessing their value. It helps him to set up standards of right and wrong, of the ugly and the beautiful, of the worth-while and the trash. In the ultimate result, background and the surrounding circumstances of upbringing play an important part, and bring about marked deviations. Take, for example, two children of the same age, the same mental ability, the same class in equally good schools, the same wealth-group, one from the city and one from the country, and yet how different can their minds be! You can readily see how their upbringing and surroundings provide each with different mental furniture.

The images, vocabulary and standards of one brought up amongst the bustle of traffic, who frequents cinemas, and touches even the fringe of healthy city life, will be quite different from those of a child brought up in rural surroundings, in peace and quietude, in the closer family and neighbourly feeling of the village or town. Their very knowledge will be different. A youngster of ten may know all about jets, and yet never have seen 'the sheep and their little lambs' pass him by on the road.

What I want to show is that numerous factors go to form the mind of a child and provide the furniture, as it were, which he will use as the basis of his judgments and moral standards. Refinement or roughness in his parents; pleasant surroundings or sordid; happiness at home or dissension—all leave their mark, gentling or ennobling, or making cynical and bitter. Every influence, for good or bad, goes to make a child's mind what it is. And the child is father to the man. And the people are but the men and women taken together as a whole.

As in the case of the individual, so with the mind of a people. All sorts of factors go to the forming of it—natural characteristics, climate, ways of life and livelihood, economic factors, the very strong influence of historical events and contacts with others, the opportunities of war and of peace, and strongest of all, their attitude to God.

They may have a natural genius for practicality, like the Romans, or be light-hearted as the Viennese. Climate may dull or brighten their mental ability. History and religion leave the deepest impress of all. What people meet with every day, their relations with one another and their neighbours, their reactions to the things that befall

them as a race, their endeavours in art and literature, all go to mould the mind of a people. They grow into a way of following standards; of looking at problems from a particular angle or in a special light; of being influenced by custom, by what others think; their horizon is narrowed or widened according as they are insular and introspective, or the opposite. And all the streams of influence meet together and form one integral, intangible thing that is their mind. It is not found completely in any one person, yet is very perceptible as a general racial characteristic.

Where does the language fit into all this? Language is merely the expression of the mind of a people. It is the vehicle for putting into words, for conveying to others, the ideas and the thoughts of an individual. With the process of time and growth, a native language becomes very closely wedded to that particular people's mind, of which it is really the expression. It has grown up with it, has forged for itself phrases and expressions to convey just what they mean and want to say. It has drawn imagery, metaphor and simile, from their life, and turns of speech which best correspond to the mental workings of the people that use it. It becomes specifically theirs, their own home-made and tongue-made instrument, so much so, that, viewed even in cold print, it still bears the imprint of their speech and thought and individuality. It carries allusion to their old gods, old beliefs, to legend and folk-tale, to the deeds of their heroes. It has grown so much the expression of their history, their way of life, their faith, as to be inseparable from them. Expression in another medium may convey the ideas, but it will not have the tang of the native genius about it. It causes a straining of words, a searching for nuances that are not in the other medium, with a consequent loss of colour and flavour and individuality. A native language is not merely the flesh that gives body to the ideas of a people—it carries the traces of the lifeblood of their veins and the stamp of their attitude and outlook on life and things.

Perhaps we may now take a glimpse at some of the things that went to form the Irish mind. In the beginning, there were the natural characteristics of the Celtic races, and the circumstances that made them warlike, ardent, idealist, perhaps, yet in no way the impractical dreamers that the exponents of the 'Celtic Twilight' would have us believe. They had a rare genius for justice and law-making. The Brehon Laws of the Irish stand alone in Western Europe as an example of a highly developed code that owes nothing whatever to the influence of the Roman Empire. The fact that Ireland never became part of that Empire, and so was saved from being steamrolled in her language, customs and laws by that mighty machine, gave her and her people an individuality that no other in Europe could claim. And later it saved her from the evils that befell those others on the breaking-up of the Empire.

Yet there is little use treating of those affairs, for something happened in Ireland which eclipsed everything else that went to the making of her history, to the forming of her mind. This new element took complete possession of her, found its way into every corner of her being, beat in her heart, pulsed in her veins, thought in her mind, and lived in her life and actions. In the fifth century, Ireland became Christian. No other race in the history of the world took so quickly and completely to the true Faith. Within a hundred years she was not only Christian entirely, but had flowered in a remarkable way into the blossom of monasticism and personal consecration to God. The Faith was by far the most potent and far-reaching of all that ever influenced her. It gave a completely new turn to her life, to her views on everything. There was nothing half-hearted in her acceptance. She made it part and parcel of herself, unstintingly, without reserve. It was then but logical that the Faith should permeate everything, giving soul and life to her customs, her art, her literature, her outlook. In the beginning we find traces of the old pagan stories being adjusted, of Cuchulainn coming back from hell, no less, to warn others; of St. Patrick's reprobation of the pagan Fianna. Old feasts were changed to Christian ones; pagan trees and wells to holy shrines.

With the new blossoming and fuller development, the Faith became the informing spirit of everything—the incentive to the life of greatest sacrifice, to the going to the martyrdom of exile for Christ's sake to found His Kingdom elsewhere. Christianity and monasticism became not merely the source of the culture of the people, but its very life and inspiration, and gave rise to the greatest treasures of art and to the finest gems of our literature, both in prose and poetry. It inspired the Cross of Cong, the Ardagh chalice, the sculptured crosses, the delicate filigree designs of the Book of Kells. Not the crosses alone, with their carved Biblical scenes, bear witness to the grip the Scripture took on the Irish mind, but the literature abounds in allusions, so simple and natural and to the point that they bespeak a deep and everyday knowledge. There was nothing primitive in the Christianity of the Irish. They had an extraordinary and intimate understanding of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, as the glosses on the Epistles of St. Paul, dating from the 7th or 8th centuries, show. For them, Jesus Christ lived in every member of His Mystical Body.

'If there be a guest in your house,
And you conceal aught from him,
'Tis not the guest will be without it,
But Jesus, Mary's Son.'

It was inevitable in a Christianity where the influence of the monastery was so great that the Divine office and the Psalms should hold a very high place. And so we find psalters and litanies in common use among the people—a much more communal use of prayer and

public worship than we may now imagine, we Irish who are supposed to be anti-liturgical in our mentality.

The process of moulding the Irish mind went on. There was the terror of the Viking raids, the destruction of the monasteries, the partial peace after Clontarf until the Normans, and then the gradual infiltration of foreign elements. But the strange thing was that these were absorbed, leaving their mark undoubtedly, but none the less becoming completely Irish. It was the Tudors that made the difference. Not merely was a new religion, an insidious heresy, so like the real faith in the beginning as to be almost indistinguishable from it, foisted on the Irish from above, but every attempt was made to stamp out their culture and its expression in their own language. Kinsale, and its destruction of the Irish cultured and educated classes, followed by the determined planting of the country, rang the knell of the old Irish order.

Her culture waned and grew weak, yet still lived and was preserved in more plebeian garments in the peasant love-songs and folk tales. Her faith was buffeted and battered. Yet Penal Law and persecution could never kill it. Much that had been attached to it had to be laid aside. Yet its essence and reality never wavered, but grew more live under persecution. And all through the years it remained, strong and living, though now deprived of its props of language and custom and way of life.

All the years the Irish language had been the natural and modelled vehicle for all the ideals and aspirations, the thoughts and feelings of the Irish mind. On it, too, the Faith had got its grip, and it, in turn, handed back to the Faith instruments for her using.

We can now have some idea of what we mean when we speak of the real, the integral Irish tradition. It is a composite thing, made up of all sorts of factors we have mentioned—customs, laws, characteristics, ways of viewing things, lore, virtues, all working together, bound and vivified by a living faith that was the driving force in the lives of the people. It was none of these things singly, no matter how important they may seem. Each contributed its own share to the forming of the peculiarly Irish tradition, and then received an imprint back on itself from the spirit and tradition it had helped to form. To regard the Faith alone as the Irish tradition would be quite wrong, though admittedly it is the most important single feature of it. Neither would all the other elements, singly or collectively, without the Faith, be the Irish tradition. They could not have been what they were without the Faith. Nor could the Faith of the Irish have taken on the special qualities of its own that it is so proud of, were it not for the soil in which it was nurtured and the circumstances that surrounded it. That tradition is the composite thing that is Irish culture in its fullest and most complete sense, the greatest refinement in living, in life, in manners, in art, literature, music, amusement. I do not

wish to imply that there is any fundamental difference between the peculiarly Irish spirituality and the spirituality of the universal Church. By no means. But I do mean that the practice of the Catholic faith in any country takes a flavour and a quality from the characteristics, the life, the history, and the growth of that people.

In the beginning, influenced by its surroundings, it takes a certain form, with certain easily-recognisable traits growing with the passage of time, and they in turn influence the lives of the people. Later on, it may re-circle again, giving a new slant or deeper direction to a tendency that was there before. Who would deny that it was the force of historical events (passing over the grace of God) that gave us Irish such a deep love for the Rosary and the Mass, and that that love for the Mass and the Rosary in its turn kept the Faith alive amongst us, in the time of persecution?

It is a common fallacy, even at the present time, that the Irish language is the compendium of the Irish tradition and Irish culture. Many think that to restore the spoken language as a living thing over all the country, would give us back our Irish heritage. Nothing could be further from the truth. Language is but a vehicle for ideas. Giving it back to us means giving us again the medium that is ours, the one that is natural to our thought and to our mind. But it will not automatically give us back our Irish mind. Irish can be used just as effectively to spread and express the very antithesis of the Irish mind, as it is **actually** being used by Communists amongst our emigrants at the present time.

Nor is the Irish tradition necessarily the tradition of the Gaelic League or of 1916 and after. They drew a partial inspiration from the real Irish tradition, and gave it a tincture of colouring of their own. But the Gaelic League made the mistake of associating culture with mere language, and of thinking that by restoring Irish as the spoken language, and fostering Irish dancing and the rather dubiously Irish kilt, that they were restoring a full Irish tradition. Language and dancing are indeed elements of that tradition, but there are many more which they overlooked. And in the 'teens and the twenties of the present century, that revival became closely allied with politics, and what then seemed to be enthusiasm for Irish culture has been shown now to have been in great part mere politics. And politics is one thing that has no part in the integral Irish tradition we should like to restore.

Even in the Faith, that once again drew its breath in the 1830's and '40's, and came forth from its Catacombs, so many features of what is taken as Irish Catholicism were not really so at all. They were merely practices transplanted from our conquerors. We forgot the spirit of our fathers, their appreciation of the Mystical Body, and excused ourselves with the traces the Penal Laws had left on us. We sang Wesleyan come-all-ye's to the sentimental words of

the pious English Father Faber, and forgot our own heritage of lovely hymns, sung to Plain Chant, and the tunes still preserved amongst the peasants, those faithful guardians of our Irish heritage.

Of that heritage, the Irish language is the natural vehicle, for it has enshrined so many of its features in words peculiarly its own, the very product and, at the same time, mould of the tradition. It was not something separate from the tradition. It was part of it. One without the other holds something of the incongruous about it. Just let me show you in two brief phrases something that nothing only the Irish mind could produce, and nothing only the Irish language could express. They are two titles from a Litany of Our Lady, written by Piaras Mac Gearailt, asserting the steadfastness of his faith despite his adherence to Protestantism for material reasons. In a really wonderful poem, he calls her: 'Grianán na Glóire,' and 'Tonn Clíona na Trócaire.' What a wealth of idea is contained in both! You may transfer the words to English, and call her 'Sunny Bower of Glory' or 'Cliona's Wave of Mercy', yet translation is impossible for it transfers only the words, and only one in touch with our Irish tradition could appreciate in full their wealth of meaning. One would need to know the significance of 'grianán,' what it was, its loveliness, its place in the Irish dwelling, to realise the beauty 'Grianán na Glóire' expresses. And to one ignorant of 'Tonn Clíona' and the waves of Ireland that groaned in sorrow and sympathy at her sufferings and hardships, the second title is barren of meaning and devoid of beauty indeed. You may force the Irish tradition into the mould of the English language, yet it will never be at home there—not until that English language and its tradition have with the years given a twist to the Irish tradition that makes it more at ease in the new mould, but, in the same degree, less itself, less Irish, than before.

WHAT IS AN RÉALT?

Many of you may be wondering what has all this to do with An Réalt, or when shall I start answering the original question—'What is An Réalt?' Yet, unknown to you, perhaps, the question has been more than half answered. At least, you will now be in a position to appreciate what it is that An Réalt sets before itself as an ideal, and why. Lest you be getting impatient, let me answer the question directly for you first, and then show you how it came about and what it implies.

An Réalt is the work-duty of an Irish-speaking praesidium of the Legion of Mary. The object of the praesidium in doing the work is precisely that of every Legion praesidium in the world—to make its own members more holy personally and to draw others closer

to God, all through Our Lady. But this praesidium we speak of uses a precise **means** to attain this common object. It strives to draw the people of Ireland closer to God through Mary, by reviving, re-vivifying and integrating in them the complete Irish tradition—language, culture, traditions, outlook, spirituality—being convinced that that tradition provides a more natural and suitable soil for the growth of the Christian life and virtues in the heart of an Irish man or woman than any imported or foreign culture. It is the **mind** and the **soul** that animated the tradition of our fathers that An Réalt wishes to reproduce in our people, and not the mere trappings without that vital spark of life—its soul. That immediately marks it off as a spiritual work, motivated by a spiritual ideal of the highest order.

How was this concept arrived at? In the years following the attainment of our freedom, in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, some discerning minds perceived that while free to follow our own destiny while still preserving strong our Faith, we were losing our roots and our national Catholic race-consciousness. English was our language and the medium of our ideas, but, far more important, our Irish mind, severely injured by 500 years of oppression, was not recovering in the new-found freedom. Our standards of beauty and taste were not our own. We had lost the notions of hospitality, of culture and art, of the manners of old, and were adopting the materialistic standards of an England, long non-Catholic and fast growing pagan. Our judgment in moral matters was being coloured, too, and not on the side of improvement. The old Faith was there, but it was being divorced from the mind it had grown up with for long centuries. It was living in strange surroundings, amidst things that failed to harmonise with it, or form an integral whole. In the passage of years, the Faith itself would undoubtedly grow weaker, sucking in, as it would, poison chemicals from the soil of cross-Channel ideas and viewpoints. Even the language revival wasn't enough. Reviving aspects of Irish culture was but a lop-sided policy. Of what use would be the mere externals if the spirit and soul were not there? Irish could convey pagan ideas and propaganda just as well as English, and would have the same effect unless the traditional Irish outlook, the view of life and circumstances formed over years of Catholic living, should counteract it. They saw in the restoring of the integral Irish culture, the full Irish mind, the means of making the Faith of the Irish a really living and vital thing in their hearts and their lives; a means of preserving that Faith and keeping it in its natural and congenial surroundings. Circumstances and events of history must inevitably differ from now. No one would be so foolish as to bring back outmoded customs or ways of life. But though circumstances had changed with the centuries the essential spirit that was our fathers' had not. That spirit, that Faith had made Ireland the Island of Saints and Scholars. The Faith was still the same. Cradled in the same mentality, the same mind, set to

the same sights, why could we not produce saints and saintly scholars again? And then, an ardent legionary, Nuala Moran, daughter of D. P. Moran, the former editor and owner of *The Leader*, got an idea. Why not use the Legion of Mary to help in this spiritual work, this renewing of the spirit of the Irish? Was not the Legion of Mary in the fullest tradition of our Irish apostles, of Columcille, Columbanus, Vergilius and Killian?

It is something we Irish should never forget, something of which we should be eternally proud, that we have given to the world the Legion of Mary. It was in 1921 that a Dublin Civil Servant and a Cork-born priest launched the organisation of Catholic Action under the standard of the Queen of Heaven, an organisation that in thirty years was to revolutionise the Catholic life of the whole world, and be hailed by the present Holy Father as one of the bulwarks of the Church. The twofold object of the Legion is to make its members better Catholics, and then, by means of the Apostolic work of those members, to draw other souls to God. This work, in the words of the Legion Handbook, is to be both substantial and active, performed 'in the spirit of faith, and in union with Mary, in such fashion that in those worked for and in one's fellow-members, the Person of Our Lord is once again seen and served by Mary, His Mother.' What a résumé of the doctrine of the Mystical Body! Is it not, too, like an echo coming down to us across the centuries, an answering call to the Irish scribe who wrote:

'If there be a guest in your house
And you conceal aught from him,
'Tis not the guest who will be without it,
But Jesus, Mary's Son.'

The Penal Laws and the hounding of centuries had driven us in on ourselves and made us selfishly think of our own salvation only, forgetting the wide command of Christ to each one of us to be an Apostle. We Irish, who had blazed an Apostolic trail over barbarian Britain and Europe in the 7th and 8th centuries, had forgotten our heritage, had grown spiritually stagnant, until the Maynooth Mission to China in 1916, and the Legion of Mary in 1921, had set us awake and alive again, set us on the road to fulfilling Christ's command, as our fathers had so literally done.

Perhaps the Legion authorities would agree to let a praesidium do for its active, substantial work, this re-moulding, this re-integrating of the true Irish mind in our own Irish people? After consideration, it was agreed to give it a trial, and little more than 10 years ago the first branch of An Réalt was begun. The Apostolate was to all the Irish, but because the Irish language was the natural vehicle and mould of the Irish tradition in its fullest sense, it was decided that

Irish should be the **main** medium (though English was not excluded, for contact with those who knew no Irish).

A Legion praesidium was founded. It was no different from any other. It had the same Legion ideals of personal goodness, the same Legion discipline and directives to follow, save that it held its meetings and conducted its business in Irish. What of its work? That work was An Réalt. The work-programme was to be a unified one, a gathering together of people in a kind of club one night a week for a period of two hours, where items designed to try to foster this Irish mentality of which we have been speaking were prominent—talks on aspects of Irish history, saints, antiquities, place-names; together with music, song and dancing. Once a month instead of the usual programme, there was to be a longer lecture by some more prominent person or guest speaker on some aspect of Irish culture, or a subject of wider cultural interest, with slides, illustrations and any other helps, if possible or feasible. Everybody was welcome. The gathering was run by the legionaries in the praesidium, and because they were Legionaries of Mary, their motive in their work was to be primarily a spiritual one, and they themselves as Mary-like as possible. Mary would have to hold quite a prominent place in their programme. Her altar would be in their midst. At every gathering they would say her Magnificat together. And was she not the Queen of Ireland too? the Queen of the Irish, who alone among the races of the world had given her a special form of her own name, Muire, to be used for none but she? Personal contact with people was achieved at the meetings by the legionaries, who went round quietly and talked, making friends with their visitors, assuring them of a welcome and expressing the hope that they would come again.

And so the work went on. Soon new branches were begun, and now An Réalt is in Limerick, Ennis, Galway, Cork, Passage, Waterford, Athlone, Wexford, Drogheda, Belfast, Longford and Tullamore, and has at least eight branches in Dublin city and suburbs, including Rathmines, Fairview, Raheny, Bray, Dun Laoghaire and Sion Hill.

Perhaps it would be well to guard against some misapprehensions regarding An Réalt. To be quite accurate, An Réalt is the name given to the gathering or the club. Its members are not necessarily legionaries at all. Most of them aren't. But the gathering is cared for and directed by legionaries—the members of the precise praesidium, whose work-duty An Réalt is. Many, even legionaries, are inclined to apply the title 'An Réalt' to the praesidium which runs it. That is quite incorrect. Again, because of its very nature, and also because of its being a Legion work-duty, the object of An Réalt is primarily a spiritual one—to draw souls nearer to God, using a rather specialised means. And so, it is in no way an organisation for the furtherance of the Irish language as such. Certainly it has the spread of the Irish language very much at heart. But unlike other societies, which make

that an **end** in itself, An Réalt uses the language, the culture, literature and history as a **means** to an end—the sanctification of souls.

On a recent visit to Ireland, M. Daniel-Rops, the well-known French author and historian, said, amongst other wise comments on Ireland: 'I have been greatly interested by the efforts to revive the Irish language. I see it as a return to the culture in which the Irish faith was rooted. Material progress is important—I have seen your industries—but in a world haunted by progress, it is also important for a nation to preserve and draw strength from what is best in its past.'

Because An Réalt is the work of a spiritual organisation of Catholic Action, politics has no part whatever in it. And things which could be allowed to other Irish societies can find no part in it. Neither should there be any narrowmindedness nor fanaticism connected with An Réalt or its working, but the warmest spirit of charity and kindness, that sees Christ in each one that comes across our path and treats Him in that Person as His Mother Mary, living in us, would. Charity is the hallmark of Christianity. That charity should show itself at An Réalt gatherings in our kindness towards those weaker at Irish, in making us help them, giving them courage and making them feel at home. We are soldiers of the Queen, knights of the Mother of God.

What other works have been sponsored by An Réalt? An annual pilgrimage to Lough Derg for the past few years; a pilgrimage to Cormac's Chapel in Cashel two years ago, where Solemn High Mass was sung for the first time in long centuries; a yearly pilgrimage to St. Brigid's Shrine at Killester, Co. Dublin. During the summertime, weather permitting, An Réalt is held when possible in the open air, at some local ruin or place of interest, and an explanatory talk on its history and remains given.

Two years ago, a special Summer Course for An Réalt was organised. Rosguill in the Co. Donegal Gaeltacht was chosen as the first venue. Seventy people, including Réaltóirí and legionaries attended, and some eighteen priests. The course lasted ten days, and the meetings were held in the Irish College there, by the courtesy of Comhaltas Uladh. Each morning there was a lecture of about an hour. The afternoon was given to an outing, a hike, or visit to some place of historical interest, and at night, after the Rosary and Legion prayers, there was an open discussion on the lecture delivered in the morning. A ceili or concert followed. The course ended with Solemn High Mass on Sunday morning, after which a small group travelled to Scotland, in the footsteps of Colmcille, to Iona.

In the summer of 1955, the course was held, for one week, in Kilmurvey, on Inishmore, the largest of the three Aran Islands. This time there were a hundred and fifty taking part, amongst whom were thirty-five priests, representing the parochial clergy and eight religious orders. A similar time-table was followed as in the previous year,

the theme of the lectures being how to help a lay-man take a more intimate part in the life of the Church. On the Saturday morning, in a ruined and roofless church of St. Mac Dua, dating from the 7th century, by kind permission of His Grace, the Archbishop of Tuam, a Missa dialogata, in which the congregation, as once, makes the responses to the priest, was celebrated on the old stone altar. The following day, the feast of Our Lady's Assumption, Solemn High Mass was sung in the local Church, to close the course. This year, a similar course is planned in Ring, Co. Waterford.

Two months ago, with the blessing of Concilium, in a little village in North Wales, was founded the first Welsh-speaking praesidium of the Legion of Mary, which was to have for its work the Welsh counterpart of An Réalt, with the same ideals and objective, the winning of Wales back to the Faith by giving her back her roots, her spiritual pre-Reformation sources and tradition. At the request of Dr. Petit, Bishop of Menevia, Irish legionaries who direct An Réalt were present to inaugurate the venture. In the 1890's, a famous Welsh Nonconformist preacher, Emrys ap Iwan, a man of wide attainments and keen judgment, declared that as a condition of her national survival, Wales would revert to Catholicism by the year 2010. Who knows? Who knows but that the transference of the Réalt ideal from Ireland to Wales, by means of the Legion, may make Wales once again 'the Land of Her Fathers'?

Let me finish with a story, a story that should give us courage to keep striving, especially when we fail to see the immediate fruits of our work.

A young Irish priest went to work in a parish in South Wales. During walks on the surrounding hills, he came across a colony of gypsy-tinker folk. They were the second and third generation of emigrant Irish, who had fled from the famine and destitution back home. Wholly unwelcome in Wales, they had banded themselves together to live in gypsy fashion. Their faith had mostly died. Baptisms were few; marriages wrong, practices of the Faith almost unknown. The young priest did all he could to remedy affairs. Regularly he tramped up to the hillside camp, and spent weary and utterly unavailing hours instructing them. He gradually lost heart, and had almost despaired of bringing about any change in them. Then one day, quite fed-up, he decided he wouldn't do any instruction, or teach any Catechism. Instead he'd bring his accordion, of which he was an accomplished player. He sat down, and played all the old Irish airs he could think of to ease his own low spirits more than anything else. Soon everyone in the camp was at his feet.

Tears ran from eyes which would never refresh themselves again in gazing on Ireland's greenness. Hearts and souls were touched. And soon after, in one day, in that bleak abode, the priest baptised 200 souls.

To help Ireland to steady and strengthen herself at her spiritual sources, which are at once Irish and European in the fullest Christian sense, is the ideal of An Réalt. It is a lofty ideal, a wonderfully spiritual one. May Mary, Queen of Ireland, and Queen of the Irish, give to their dreams reality, and to their hopes and aspirations fulfilment, so that once again, through us, all nations shall call her Blessed, that she may be Queen of the Universe in truth and in deed.