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## EUNTES DOCETE OMNES GENTES All Hallows College, Dublin A World-Wide Apostolate

This essay was written by Canon Basil David O'Sullivan

Canon Basil David O'Sullivan, a priest of the Diocese of Dunkeld in Scotland, was born in Fishguard, Wales on July 19, 1932. He attended All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland from 1950 to 1956 and was ordained a Catholic priest in All Hallows Seminary chapel on June 17, 1956 for the Diocese of Dunkeld. He received a Licentiate in Canon Law from the Gregorian University in Rome and is a member of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

He was appointed Canon of the Cathedral Chapter, Diocese of Dunkeld, in 1992 and named Chaplain to the Holy Father in 2008 by Pope Benedict XVI. He presently serves as parish priest in the Church of the Holy Family, Dunblane, and the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Auchterarder, Scotland.

Relying on the work of Father Kevin Condon, C.M. in his book, *The Missionary College of All Hallows, 1842-1891*, published by All Hallows College, 1986, Monsignor O'Sullivan has written this essay on the history of All Hallows College, Dublin. The college campus will be handed over the University of Dublin on November 1, 2016.



Canon Basil David O'Sullivan

This quotation from Sacred Scripture, *Euntes, Docete Omnes Gentes*, is written in stone over the lintel of Drumcondra House, Dublin, the main building of All Hallows College, and is the college motto. It means: *Go, teach all nations*.



**All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland**

The college was founded by Father John Hand, a curate of Dublin diocese, in October, 1842. For a curate to found a seminary is in itself unique. He had the idea of founding a Missionary College whose priests would leave Ireland and serve in foreign countries at the request of the local bishop. In that way it was driven by the needs of the local church and the young priest would be committed to spending the rest of his life in his adopted diocese. This was a huge step, as he would have no idea of the country or diocese to which he was going, nor the bishop of that diocese to whom he would owe a life-long obedience, nor indeed of the clergy and people among whom he would spend the rest of his life—surely a real missionary vocation.

No other seminary in the world had such a wide apostolate. It spanned North and South America, including Argentina, the West Indies, South Africa, India, England and Scotland --- from the far north of Canada and Newfoundland to Australia and New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. In addition, All Hallows sent priests to the various military bases of the British Empire, 25% of whose military personnel in the 19th century were Irish Catholics. Something like four and a half thousand priests were ordained in All Hallows from October 1842 onwards; they were divided more or less equally between Britain, the United States and Australia/New Zealand, with significant numbers going to South America, Argentina and India.

By 1860 there was scarcely a province in the English speaking world that had not sought and received priests from All Hallows College. The success within eighteen years was remark-

able. In 1850 there were ninety students and 25 missions; in 1860 there were 200 students and about fifty missions.

Associated with All Hallows, there were numerous priests from other colleges in Ireland and, of course, religious sisters going all over the world at the same time. The priests would be asked to chaperone the religious sisters on the long and hazardous journeys which they made. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in newly developed countries the Catholic Church was in a desperate situation without any resources-- dependent for the most part on France and Ireland to keep it going. So also was the Church in England and Scotland as it emerged from the penal laws. It was most of all on the Irish missionary movement that the English speaking world depended and All Hallows was very much a leader in this apostolate.

The missionary effort of France was based on the middle classes which received a great impetus in 1823 when a young French girl from Lyon, Pauline Jaricot, with some friends, founded the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. This was an immediate success in France and elsewhere and was the inspiration behind the Irish missionary effort, having a particular influence on John Hand. Unlike the French missionary movement which came mainly from the middle classes, the Irish missionary movement came from a people dispossessed and impoverished.

The priests and sisters were also unique in that they would be obliged to a celibate life, unlike the rest of the emigrants who obviously would be married or at least have that option. Within two or three years of the founding of the College in 1842, the Irish famine struck and emigration out of Ireland, always present, mushroomed. It was undoubtedly this tragedy which made All Hallows so vital to the church in the countries to which the Irish were emigrating. Perhaps one can see the hand of Providence behind all this

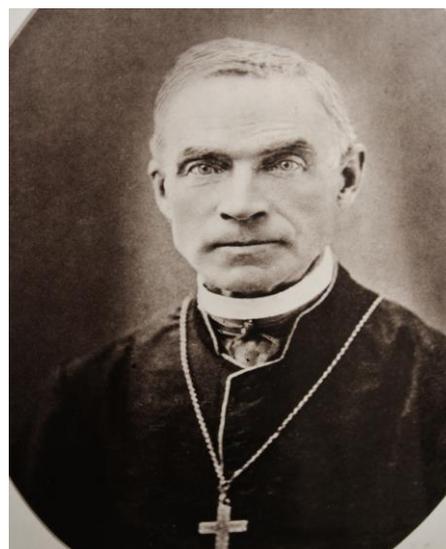
Bishops from all over the English-speaking world began to realize the enormity of the problem and turned to All Hallows for help. In the 1840s, the first priests ordained in the college went to Glasgow. Bishop Scott of the Western District in Scotland wrote to the Rector: "If I train priests, I cannot build chapels. If I build chapels, I cannot train priests." The cost of keeping a student in All Hallows for a year in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was £ 10, which gives some idea of the over-all poverty of the church at that time. Life in the College certainly was not luxurious. That same Scottish bishop got his priests through the generosity of the College and the help from the Congregation of Propaganda in Rome. All Hallows as a missionary college was directly under the jurisdiction of Propaganda in Rome. It was because of the spirit of the College, staff and student body alike, that any bishop who requested help was ever refused volunteer priests to go to his diocese.

During the first fifty years of the founding of the College more than 600 priests went to the USA. The State of California has a special relationship to All Hallows College. In 1850 the Spanish Bishop of Monterey, Joseph Sadoc Alemany, paid a visit to All Hallows. Two years previously, the State had been ceded by Mexico to the US and in that very year of 1850 it became a State of the Union. Most Catholics in California at that time were Spanish speaking. However, in spite of this, Bishop Alemany turned to All Hallows for priests. A professor from the College, Father Eugene O'Connell, volunteered to give three years of service to the Church of California. For the rest of the century the majority of priests of San

Francisco and Sacramento were from All Hallows. In this way California became one of the most concentrated mission fields of the College.



**Archbishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany, OP**  
**Archbishop of San Francisco**



**Bishop Eugene O'Connell**  
**Bishop of the Vicariate of Marysville,**  
**and the Diocese of Grass Valley**

It was a mission of the poor to the poor. Many of these young priests lived in very difficult circumstances. In the ghettos of the big cities such as Liverpool or Glasgow, they ministered to people living in terrible poverty. Not properly cared for themselves, they died of T. B. or what was called “famine-disease”. In the huge spaces of North America or Australia, on the other hand, the priests were badly housed and badly cared for and were forced to cope with the heat and cold of a foreign clime, while travelling vast distances on horse-back over dirt tracks to minister to their impoverished flocks. Few of them lived long enough to reach middle age.

Many of the priests wrote back to the Rector of the College to tell him how they were getting on—their letters now a priceless source of information on the conditions of the Irish immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the American Civil War the Irish priests found themselves on both sides of the conflict, depending on where they lived. Richmond, Virginia received most of its priests from All Hallows in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of them, Father Michael Costelloe, was present when the famous raid on the U.S arsenal took place at Harper’s Ferry. In his letter sent back to All Hallows he casually mentions that he spoke with the leader, John Brown, in prison and had an argument with him over slavery. Since the priest was on the southern side, John Brown had no time for him. This was the same John Brown whose soul goes marching on. Costelloe had no idea he was conversing with a legend.

Another All Hallows priest, Thomas O’Reilly, gets the credit for dissuading General Sherman from destroying the churches and courthouse of Atlantic City as he marched through Georgia. After the war, O’Reilly built the fine shrine to the Immaculate Conception in downtown Atlanta.

Australia also figures prominently in the story of All Hallows. Initially travelling on sailing ships, and even long after on steam ships, the young priests and religious sisters who went there would never see their families or their homeland again. Simple white crosses now mark their graves all over the world. The priests left behind them in their adopted new countries beautiful churches and lively parishes, and the religious sisters in many cases left behind first-class schools, universities, hospitals and nursing homes. These institutions stemmed from a very inauspicious start by young men and women, all of whom, no doubt, were homesick for their loved ones and, initially at least, as most of them came from rural Ireland, not a little bewildered by the strangeness of it all. These priests and sisters had only their strong faith and their love for the Lord and His Church to motivate them.

On November 1, 2016, 174 years after its foundation, the institution of All Hallows will formally cease to exist, the buildings and grounds having been purchased by the University of the City of Dublin. Over that period of the Irish missionary movement, by God's grace and the sacrifices of the missionaries and their families, the motto of All Hallows has indeed been fulfilled: *Euntes Docete Omnes Gentes*. To the Lord be the glory. Amen



Photo from the All Hallows Website

### All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland

*This essay is based on the book: "The Missionary College of All Hallows 1842-1891", by Kevin Condon C. M. All Hallows College, Dublin, 1986.*