

Edmund Ignatius Rice

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Rice Name will not be forgotten By Rev. Bro. F.S. Keane, C.F.C

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The name Edmund Rice is a household word all over the world. The name is equally familiar in Waterford, as in Australia, in Callan as in India, in Dublin as in the Americas.

In recent years, several biographies have come on the market. The success of the religious institutes, the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers, has ensured that the name Rice will not be forgotten.



But who were the Rices? How far back can the lineage of the family be traced? Were there any other Rices? Relatives of the Rices bearing the family name, as well as the names Tierney, Dunne, Shirley, Kervick, Cummins, Dunne, Maher and several others are still living in Waterford, Callan and elsewhere.

Volumes could be written tracing the history of all these families, and the immediate family of Edmund Rice provides ample material for courageous researchers. ***Pictured: the former tomb of Rev. Bro Rice prior to the removal of the remains to the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.***

Robert Rice married a widow, Mrs. Margaret Murphy, formerly Tierney. Besides the two daughters, Joan and Jane Murphy, there were seven sons, Thomas, Patrick, William, Edmund,

Richard, John and Michael.

Like all families, there was a mixture of success and failure, great joys and great sorrows. Edmund has received well deserved media coverage since the early nineteenth century.

In this article he will not get any special treatment, rather will we focus the spotlight on his step-sisters, his six brothers and his daughter, Mary.

Thomas Rice

The eldest of the Rice boys, Thomas, was the proprietor of a licensed premises in Bridge Street, Callan. We cannot be certain as to why he became a publican, but it is likely that he inherited, or managed the business. His uncle, Patrick Rice, was a publican in the same street before, and in all probability, Thomas took over this business.

Patrick Rice had two children of his own, James and Margaret, yet it seems that his nephew took charge of the pub. When the Founder's father, Robert, made his will in September 1787 his farm and property at Westcourt were divided equally between six of his seven sons and his widow.

Thomas was excluded.

This may be explained by the fact that he already had property and a means of livelihood.

However, a token payment was made in the will as "I leave and bequeathe unto my eldest son, Thomas Rice of Callan, Publican, the sum of two shillings and eight pence halfpenny and no more." (This sum of 2/8½ was the Irish equivalent of the English 2/6. Something like the sterling £ and the Irish punt today).

We know that Thomas married sometime in the 1790's but the name of his wife is unknown. They had four children, Patrick, John, Michael and Mary. All four emigrated to Newfoundland in 1825.

In the same year, Edmund Rice applied to the Pope for permission to spend £150 Sterling on his relatives who "are really poor and greatly need his assistance." This permission was granted, but there is no record to show if Edmund Rice availed of the permission, and if he did, how the money was spent. It is not unlikely that this money was used to cover the costs of the boat trip across the Atlantic.

United States

John and Mary subsequently went to the United States. John and Mary's husband were killed in a rail accident; Michael married a Miss O'Sullivan, and had no family. Patrick married Mary Doyle. They had seven sons and seven daughters.

Their eldest son, Patrick, married Agnes McCarthy, whose daughter, Bridget (born in 1878) became a Sister of Mercy in St. John's, taking the name Josephine in religion. She died in 1969.

She wrote an account of the family memories of Edmund Rice, still retained in Newfoundland. These include the tradition that young Edmund brought the local children into the family home at West-court where he gave them simple religious instruction and taught them the common prayers. The story of the fall from the horse, which resulted in the death of Edmund's wife, Mary, has also its source in Newfoundland.

Sr. Josephine's brother, John, married Bridget O'Donnell. Their eldest son joined the Christian Brothers in St. John's, in 1928.

Patrick Rice

The second eldest son, Patrick, married Mary Sullivan and they lived in the Rice home in West-court. They had no family. Patrick received £150 Sterling from Edmund as his share of their father's estate. Edmund Rice's daughter, Mary, was cared for by Patrick and his wife from 1816 until 1823. Edmund recorded payment for this service in his account book:-

"11 August, 1823: my brother Patrick's wife has settled with me for all rent due to her to me and of me to her together with Mary Rice and all up to the 19th day of September next. Pd....£23.00.

Patrick Rice died in 1833 and was buried in the local Killaloe cemetery. His widow survived him many years. As late as 1847 she was in dispute with another Rice widow, Brigid, wife of Richard, about ownership of land at Westcourt.

William Rice

The third son, William, is the mystery man of the family. He is mentioned in his father's will, getting his equal share with his brothers. It is likely that he died before 1795. In his will of that year, the youngest son, Michael, bequeathed various sums of money to several members of the family. He does not mention William as a beneficiary, but says: "I leave and bequeath to my brother William's two children the sum of ten Pounds Stl. but in case both said children should die before my decease or before this sum should be expended on them Their Moiety I leave and bequesth to my Excr. to dispose of in Charitable uses as he shall think proper."

We do not know William's wife's name, or that of either of the two children. The tone of Michael's will suggests that these two children were in indifferent health. They may have died young, which may explain why so little is known about them.

Richard Rice

The fifth boy of the Rices, Richard, married Bridget Egan. They had four sons and five daughters. This family lived at Kylanaskaugh, near Callan. A family named Brennan had been evicted from this holding before Richard moved in. Needless to say, the Brennans did not take too kindly to this situation.

The Brennans had their revenge in 1832 when Richard and family were themselves evicted. Fortunately for them, the old Tierney home at West-court was vacant, so they moved in. This house was facing the Rice house, and about fifteen yards away. Richard died in 1834 and is buried in the Grove Cemetery, Callan.

His widow and family continued to live at West-court. The two Rice widows, Mary (wife of Patrick) and Bridget (wife of Richard) do not seem to have been in full agreement of who owned what. Mary's family, the Sullivans, tried to gain possession of some fields occupied by Bridget. The latter had recourse to Mr. P. Kirwan, a Barrister in Thurles. The dispute was settled. This was in 1847.

On the death of Mary Rice, Richard's son, John moved into the original home, with his wife, Catherine Cross. They had two children, Richard and Bridget. John died in 1865, aged forty, from blood poisoning. Thomas Shelly, of Callan, tells us:

"When John Rice of Westcourt died in 1865, the Church Wardens objected to his interment in the burial place of the Rice's of Westcourt, at the southern gable of the Butler Mortuary chapel, Green Street. That grave was close to the chapel wall and opening it might cause damage to the foundations of the building. John Rice was in consequence interred in the plot of the Tierney's, his relatives, and a monument to his memory marks his grave in Green Street Cemetery."

The Children

The children, Richard and Bridget, were not very strong. When the Christian Brothers' school was established in Callan in 1868, Richard, then aged five, had the honour of laying the foundation stone, as the last of the male Rice still living in Westcourt. He died four years later. He was buried, like his father, in the Tierney grave. The monument erected on the tomb reads:

"Erected by Mrs. Catherine Rice, alias Cross of Westcourt, in memory of her beloved husband, John Rice, who died 5th Feb., 1865, aged 40 years. Also of her children who died young. RIP. Of her son, Richard Rice, who died 2 Jan., 1872, aged 9 years."

Catherine Rice continued to live in West-court until her death in 1895. She is usually referred to as 'the Widow Rice.' An oil painting of the widow can be seen in the breakfast room of the house.

She was a very generous woman. Towards the close of her life she experienced financial difficulties, and she asked her cousin, Patrick Doheny, to manage the farm for her. On her death, Mr. Doheny inherited the property.

This led to some family arguments, as her cousins, the Marums, maintained that they had more claim on the estate. This problem was solved in a most unique manner.

The widow Rice's sister Ellen, married Thomas Marum. As her children predeceased her, no one had direct claim on the property. The rival claims of the Dohenys and the Marums had their own merits. The services of the Augustinian Prior of Callan, Fr. Patrick O'Brien, were sought in an effort to find a solution.

He arranged that Edward Marum, son of Thomas and Ellen, would marry Johanna Madigan. Johanna's sister, Margaret, married Patrick Doheny. Patrick died in 1914. His wife died in 1944. Westcourt then passed to Ellen Marum, daughter of Edward and Johanna.

So Westcourt became the property of the Marums, even though it was necessary to jump a generation to achieve this. The two Madigan sisters, who by their marriages helped to solve the problem, were nieces of Fr. O'Brien. Ellen Marum married Patrick O'Neill. The O'Neills lived in the house until 1965, when the Christian Brothers bought the premises.

Augustinians

There was always a very strong association with the Augustinian Friars on the part of the Rices and Tierneys. Two of Margaret Tierney's relations, Daniel Tierney and James Tierney, were members of the Order, and resident in Callan at different times.

It comes as no surprise then that one member of the Rice family would opt for the priesthood. John was born in 1772 and like Edmund, he went to Waterford to work for his Uncle Michael. It is possible that he went to Cadiz, San Lucar, Seville and other Spanish cities on business.

However, he entered the Augustinian novitiate in New Ross in 1790. He was sent to Rome for studies and during this time Edmund provided money for his upkeep.

Fr. Rossiter, the Prior of New Ross, recorded in his account book: "10 guineas received from Edmund Rice for his brother in Rome." In 1796 the sum of £15 was received. John was ordained priest in 1801.

Fr. John returned to the Callan Priory soon afterwards. He was appointed Prior, a position he held from 1803 to 1819. The Friars' church consisted of two small thatched cabins. The wall separating the two houses was removed thus providing a 'spacious' place of worship.

On one occasion, while the Little Grey Friar, Fr. Patrick Grace, OSA, was celebrating Mass the roof was in danger of collapsing. Some strong men in the congregation succeeded in holding the roof up until Mass was concluded.

We know that Edmund Rice never considered problems, but means of overcoming them. John in similar fashion set about building a permanent stone church on a plot of land in Mill Street. He drew up a list containing the names of all families in the Callan district, and more importantly, the amount of contribution he estimated each could easily provide. Being held in high regard in the district, he was successful in collecting the required finances for his church.

Rome

The Augustinian Friary was suppressed about the year 1557, and its property confiscated. In 1817 Patrick Rice acted for his brother, John, and purchased a piece of land known as the "Abbeyfield," from the Strangeways. This field had originally belonged to the Friars. Thus, the Friars were back on land from which they were unjustly banished 260 years previously.

John was called to Rome in 1819. He was well known to most of the important members of the Roman curia, especially Cardinal Fontana. This was providential, as John acted as agent for his brother, Edmund.

This influence was crucial as the Pope, Pius VII, issued the Brief of Approval of the Congregation of Christian Brothers in September, 1820. Application for the Brief had been made in 1818.

The speed with which approval came was most unusual. While in Rome John Rice was instrumental in having Dr. Patrick Kelly, Bishop of Richmond, Virginia; USA, translated to the vacant see of Waterford and Lismore, on the death of Dr. Robert Walsh.



Some time later, John returned to Callan. On St Stephen's Day, 1825 while celebrating Mass, a woman in the church screamed that the gallery was collapsing. Panic ensued in a totally, unnecessary wild rush, for the door. Fifteen persons were killed, and several more injured. ***Pictured: The President of Ireland, the late Mr Eamon de Valera pictured with Brothers from Mount Sion.***

In a typical act of generosity, Fr. John paid all the funeral expenses, comforted the wounded and bereaved, and provided money for the relief of families who suffered hardship because of the accident.

In 1829, Fr. John was secretary of the delegation that met the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington. They went to London to protest about the inclusion of penal clauses, mainly concerning the banishment of all regular religious from the kingdom, which were part of the Catholic Emancipation package.

He was brought back to Rome again in 1832. Again he acted as agent for Edmund.

Two of the major problems facing the Christian Brothers then were the establishing, and subsequent closure, of schools in Gibraltar, and the proposed opening of pay schools in Ireland.

In 1840, John was nominated Bishop. However, before ordination he was in Malta on business on behalf of the Holy See and on 12 December that year he died suddenly.

Michael Rice

The youngest member of the Rice family was Michael, born about 1773/4, and he also settled down in Waterford. By trade he was a cooper. The making of barrels was a very important element of the provision trade, as most foodstuffs were exported in them.

Michael would have a good customer as Edmund would need barrels for his victualling business. However, new technology was raising its ugly head then. Many coopers were facing redundancy as the pig curers was switching from barrels to canvas wrappers for the pork.

There was considerable agitation by these men. The mayor warned that combinations (I suppose Unions in today's parlance) were illegal. Publicans were asked to be vigilant that their premises were not used for meetings of these troublemakers.

We do not know if Michael Rice was involved in this agitation. We do know that he made his will in 1795- He bequeathed sums of money to some of his brothers, his mother, and other relatives. Each received £10.

Edmund was bequeathed £20 and also appointed Executor- Michael did not forget the poor as the will stipulated. "Also I leave and bequeathe to the said Edmd. Rice the sum of Ten Pounds Stl, for to dispose of in Charitable uses as he shall think proper."

Great confidence was always reposed by the Rices in Edmund. We see Michael appointed him his executor, as their father, Robert, did in his will in 1787.

Mary Rice

In my experience, people interested in Edmund Rice rarely ask questions about his brothers and sisters. But the daughter, Mary, always merits attention.

All of Edmund Rice's biographers never mention her. The History of Mount-sion quaintly states that Mr. Rice engaged in matrimony, but that his wife died young. In Edmund Ignatius Rice and the Christian Brothers (1926); Br. McCarthy first mentions the daughter:

When he (Edmund Rice) was 23 years of age he married but his biographer has left us only meagre information of this event of his life. The early brothers, with a delicacy of feeling that is commendable, seldom refer to it. We only know that his married life was brief, for his wife died young, leaving an only daughter whom the pious father provided for during her life.

Mrs. Rice died in 1789. Edmund moved his residence from somewhere in Ballybricken to Arundel Lane. His step-sister, Joan Murphy, came from Callan to act as housekeeper and care for the young invalid daughter, Mary.

When Edmund opened his first school in New Street in 1802, Mary was brought to Callan, and cared for by her uncle Patrick and his wife, Mary.

I have referred to payments to Mrs. Patrick Rice for the care of Mary elsewhere in this article. This was in 1823. We know that the Rices experienced poverty around 1825, and that Edmund came to their assistance. Having the care of the invalid Mary may have been too great burden for the family. She was remembered in Callan 'as a grown girl' and people wondered what had happened to her. She would have been thirty-three or four years of age in 1823. she may have left Callan then, being remembered as 'a grown girl.'

In 1826/27 she was cared for by a Miss Anne Clarke, as her father recorded payments in the account book of Mount Sion. She may have moved to Carrick-on-Suir where she had relatives.

In 1786 a local man, Patrick Dalton, married "the agreeable Miss Tierney, daughter of Daniel Tierney, of Max-town, Co. Kilkenny." Edmund's great-grandfather, Daniel Tierney of Maxtown, died in 1727. It is unlikely that this new Mrs. Dalton was the daughter of this Daniel Tierney.

Mature people usually settle down to very happy and contented married lives, but I wonder if this bride, forty years after the death of her father, and her own date of birth unknown, could still be 'agreeable.'

Payments

Various sums of money were paid regularly for the support of Mary Rice from Mion Sion for either 'maintenance' or 'outdoor relief.' In a letter in 1850, Br. Myles I. Kelly, executor of Edmund Rice's will, questioned some payments to the Rice relatives:

"...about 1836 I heard Br. Igns. Rice make some statement about those poor relatives in Callan. He mentioned Rich Rice's children or Paddy Rice's children as if there were something due to some of them, but of this I am quite uncertain, but I suppose there are many of them there, and why *this person in particular* (italics mine), should for, so long a time, receive so much, does not appear, and it might be worth enquiring into. ...If it were that weak headed creature the D...r, I should feel ourselves bound to support her."

In a note appended to, this letter Br. Hearn states:

"...the Daughter alluded to above by Br. Igns. is living in Carrick and is getting something from this (Mount Sion) from time to time."

It is impossible now to specify the nature of Mary Rice's sickness, or the degree of the ailment. In all probability she may have suffered some mental retardation as it is thought that her birth was premature, her mother having been thrown from a horse.

What is remarkable is that she lived to be seventy years of age. As medical developments were not as advanced in the early nineteenth century as we know them today, the fatherly care, in life, and after his death, the attention of the Christian Brothers and the Rice family, ensured a comfortable and peaceful life for her.

The Carrick-on-Suir account book, kept very carefully by the Superior, Br. J. P. Corbett, carries the following statement:

"M. Rice who from time to time received something for her maintenance died in Carrick-on-Suir on the 23rd of January 1859 and was buried in the churchyard in Carrickbeg, on January 24th '59."

Step Sisters

Before her marriage to Robert Rice, Margaret Tierney married a Mr. Murphy of the Minauns, Callan. These Murphys, were, according to the local tradition 'a very decent family.' There were two daughters in this family, Joan and Jane.

Both are mentioned as beneficiaries in Robert Rice's will, even though they received only token bequests. When Edmund's wife died in 1789, Joan came to Waterford to care for his daughter. In his will in 1795, Michael Rice left £10 to his step-sister Jane. Joan is not mentioned. We know that she invested the not inconsiderable sum of £500 in Edmund's business, indicating that she had independent means, and obviously not in need of the £10 given to her sister.

Her great grand daughter, Maria Maher, maintains that it was Joan who urged Edmund to devote his time and talents to the teaching of the poor of Waterford. She states that:

"Within a week after his sister making this suggestion he (Edmund) took boys into his own house, and he began to teach and instruct them."

"We do not know who Joan married. It is likely that she married in Callan, as her great grand- daughter, above mentioned, lived there before moving to live in Dublin.

Mrs. Maher also tells us that Jane Murphy "got married after Brother Rice had given up his business, to a man of the name of Rice, but who was in no way related to her."

This statement presents a little difficulty. We know Edmund opened his first school in 1802. Jane was married before 1798. The contradiction can be explained if we do not interpret the statement too literally.

Edmund Rice had been teaching boys in his home long before he moved to New Street. Jane probably got married some time in the 1790s. Edmund had made up his mind to open schools as early as 1793. Confusion about the sequence of events, coupled with the usual quirks of human memory is prone to, may have caused the seeming contradiction above.

John Rice

The John Rice whom Jane married was a rather picturesque character. He was held in the highest regard in his native County Kilkenny. He lived at Newlands, the Seven Houses, Cuffesgrange.

Being a member of the United Irishmen, a fact he made no effort to conceal from the authorities, the Yeomen were anxious to arrest him. John attended a meeting of the United Irishmen in 1798 at Cuffesgrange.

Some spy supplied the military in Kilkenny with the names of all who attended the meeting, and the gist of what was discussed. The houses of several United Irishmen were surrounded. One man was caught and hanged in front of his own house. Another escaped in a yeast barrel to Dublin.

John Rice's house was surrounded and set ablaze. John, however, had gone into hiding. Edmund hid him in his house (a capital offence). Some days later Edmund supervised the loading of several barrels of meat for Newfoundland. John was hidden in one and despite strict military supervision, he escaped.

The character of John Rice earned him the nickname "The Wild Rapparee." His exploits merited for him the poetic efforts of a contemporary balladeer:

From Ballyhale to Slievenamon
They searched the woods as they went on
The cornfields of Galteemore
They searched them o'er and o'er,
The ships and traders at the quay
They searched and searched going out to sea
But tale nor tiding trace nor sound
Of Rice the rebel they ne'r found!

Mary Rice

John rice and his wife, Jane had one daughter, Mary. She married a Protestant named John Shirley. As was customary in pre-Ne Tamere days the boys were brought up in the father's religion, the girls in that of the mother.

Maria Maher tells us that This Mr. Shirley and his three sons who were brought up Protestants, subsequently became Catholics because of the virtues and good example of the Rices. Other branches of the Shirley family also became converts to the Catholic Church.

The landlord, Flood of Farmley, did not take too kindly to this change of religion and had the Shirleys evicted. The locals on their part were equally annoyed at this rather harsh treatment. When new tenants arrived to take possession of the former Shirley holdings a hostile crowd set upon the unfortunate new arrivals.

A riot ensued and several people were arrested. The Shirley man and their workers, after cooling their heels in Kilkenny Gaol, were transported for twenty one years to Botany Bay. Descendents of these Shirleys are living in Hobary today.

The women spent some years in prison on Spike Island.

Edmund Rice and his brother Fr. John earned their place in the history books. The other members of the family are either unknown or forgotten. We know the dated of death and place of burial of only some of them. Still the later generations held their uncle in high regard.

Successive families, despite strong desires to modernise the place, refused to change the character of the house in Callan. This was due to the reverence and respect they had for the great man born in the house. The simple grave in Mount Sion became a place of pilgrimage.

Maria Maher states: My aunts and my uncles often visited the burial place of Brother Rice in Mount Sion and they took a great pride in their connection with him because of his virtue and goodness.

Feast Day of 5th May allocated as Edmund Rice beatified in Impressive Ceremony

By unknown author

From Dungarvan Observer, 12.10.1996

FOR THE five thousand or so Irish people who had travelled to Rome, there must have been a great sense of excitement and occasion as the bells pealed out across St. Peter's Square to herald the start of the celebrations which would see Edmund Ignatius Rice and fifteen others raised to the rank of Blessed within the Catholic Church.

Among those in St. Peter's Square, was a Dungarvan contingent including a six-person delegation from the Christian Brothers Schools, led by Secondary School Principal, Mr. Jim Ryan, as well as members of the wider Christian community. The lengthy Beatification ceremony was carried live on RTE and was watched by many thousands at home, who have devotion to, or it least immense respect for, the founder of both the Irish Christian Brothers and the Presentation Brothers.

Among the official Church delegation were Cardinal Cathal Daly, who recently retired as Archbishop of Armagh, his successor Dr. Sean Brady, the Archbishops of Tuam and Dublin, the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Most Rev. Dr. William Lee and seventeen other members of the Irish Hierarchy.

During the lengthy ceremony which was led by Pope John Paul II, looking increasingly frail and due to go into hospital at the end of the celebrations, Archbishop Desmond Connell formally introduced the cause of the man who is simply referred to as the Founder by his followers and successors. Pope John Paul then read the official proclamation for which Ireland has waited for a century and a half and for which the Christian Brothers have worked for the last eighty-five years.

"In virtue of our Apostolic authority, we grant your request that Edmund Ignatius Rice and his companions be declared Blessed today," were the words which transformed the Status of Edmund Rice and gave the Irish people a new spiritual figure.

After the declaration, huge tapestries of the sixteen new Blesseds were unveiled overlooking the Square as the Sistine Choir rendered an enthusiastic Alleluia.

DEEPLY COMMITTED

"Edmund Rice was a deeply committed religious," said Pope John Paul, in his address later to the pilgrims in St. Peter's Square and to the rest of the world. "Who will ever measure all the good which has come from the spiritual insights, warm heart and determined faith of Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice. Once more Ireland has given the Church and the world a striking testimony of complete reliance on Christ. Keeping doing all things that you have been thought by him. Then the God of Peace will be with you."

The Pope's short address was greeted enthusiastically by the Irish pilgrims, who were all readily identifiable by the special green scarf they wore around their necks. Later, he called for a restoration of peace in Northern Ireland. "Let us all pray," he said, "that the Irish people will put tension and conflict behind them and build a brighter and more serene future for the younger generation."

The Superior General of the Christian Brothers, Br. Edmund Garvey, said that this special occasion marked the beginning of the end for many things about the Brothers, about the congregations and the way they go about their mission.

"It is also a significant day of new beginnings with Edmund, and our recent General Chapter took that as its theme. I believe that with the lay people who are joined with us now, there are new beginnings ahead of us in the world today. "

There is a general acceptance that while the work of the Christian Brothers may be coming to an end in this country and that vocations are likely to be few in the future -there has only been one new novice in the last six years -the demand for their work and guidance is great in the Third World. There, the people suffer the same poverty, degradation and hardships today, as the people of Ireland suffered in the time of Edmund and the potential harvest is a great one.

MIRACLE CURE

"This is a wonderful occasion For all Irish people around the world," said Mr. Kevin Ellison, the man whose miracle cure was accepted as having been as a result of the direct intervention of Edmund. He brought a relic of Edmund to the altar in a special shrine.

Edmund Ignatius Rice was born in Westcourt, Callan, Co. Kilkenny, on 1st June, 1762, and died in Mount Sion in Waterford on 29th August, 1844, at the age of 82. In his lifetime he experienced enormous wealth, he was a millionaire in today's terms, was briefly married before his young wife was killed in a riding accident and had a young handicapped daughter who outlived him.

The vision of the poor in Waterford was always before him and, freed from family responsibilities and inspired by a Pastoral Letter by Bishop Hussey, he resolved to make the elimination of ignorance and poverty through education his life's work.

He disposed of his enormous estate and ploughed the assets into schools for the education of poor boys, who had no other means of education available to them.

He first founded a school in his adopted City of Waterford, sending others of his spiritual group to Carrick-on-Suir some time later, to look after the needs of the boys there.

In 1807, the brothers, John and James Mulcahy, arrived in Dungarvan to found a school in Main Street, and 185 years and two changes of location later, their successors left the town having seen it change from a small collection of hovels to a thriving capital of a well ordered county with a well educated population.

In 1808, the first formal congregation was founded in the Presentation Convent in Waterford and the following year the Brothers took perpetual vows. It was not until 1820, however, that the Christian Brothers Institute was recognised by Rome, by the issuing of a Papal Brief approving of the new Brotherhood which would be subject only to Rome itself.

The Institute thrived, spreading to Britain in 1825, Australia in 1869 and Canada and New Zealand in 1876. The Brothers are now also active in India, South Africa, USA, Argentina, Trinidad, Zambia, Ghana, Liberia and more recently in Sudan where Brother Declan Power, the sole Dungarvan Christian Brother now ministers.

There is much need of their services in all of those countries by a people who are proud and pleased to have the Brothers in their midst.